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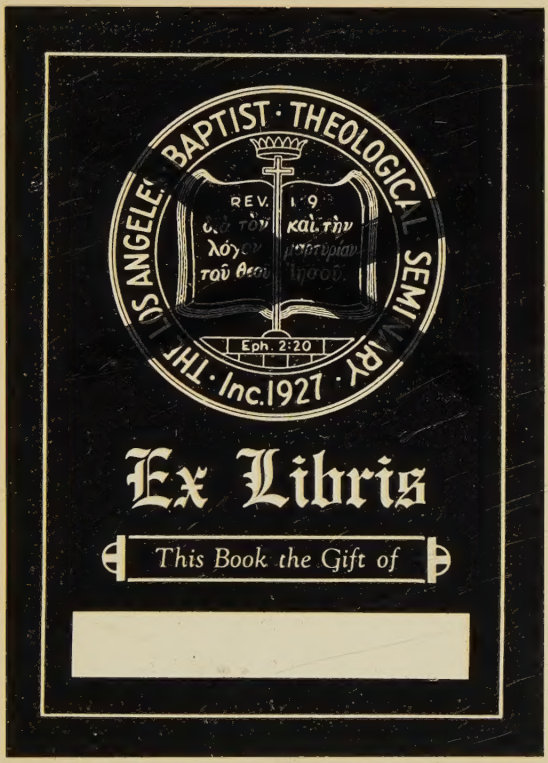

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"THE BELOVED PERSIS"

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MISSION PROBLEMS AND MISSION METHODS IN SOUTH CHINA

Lectures on Evangelistic Theology

BY

J. CAMPBELL GIBSON

M.A., D.D., GLASGOW

ENGLISH PRESBYTERIAN MISSION, SWATOW, CHINA

SECOND EDITION

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YOUNG PEOPLE'S MISSIONARY MOVEMENT

NEW YORK

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"It has for a long time seemed to me that missionary facts, and the missionary problem generally, are susceptible of more special—may I say more scientific?—treatment than they generally receive."

HENRY DRUMMOND.

To my Wife,

REAL AUTHOR OF ANY GOOD THIS BOOK CONTAINS;

To the Students of Five Colleges,

WHOSE FRIENDSHIP LIGHTENED A DREADED BURDEN,

AND LEFT IN ITS PLACE HAPPY MEMORIES;

And to my Children,

WHO MAY WISH TO KNOW

WHY THEY HAVE SO LONG BEEN PARTED

FROM THEIR FATHER.

PREFACE

THESE lectures were delivered by appointment of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, in connection with the Lectureship on Evangelistic Theology in the Free Church Colleges of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen. Portions of the course were also given in the College of the Presbyterian Church of England, then in Queen Square, London, now removed to Westminster College, Cambridge. A few of the Lectures were also given in Manitoba College, Winnipeg, one of the colleges of the Canadian Presbyterian Church. The Lectureship was a two years' appointment, but duty in China only permitted my holding it for one year. Partly in the hope of making up this lack of service I now venture to print these Lectures.

A few prefatory words are needed to explain the obvious omissions of this volume. Designed originally as a course of lectures to students heavily burdened with other work, it was necessary to aim at unity of impression rather than at exhaustive treatment. I tried therefore in the earlier lectures to give some idea of the task that confronts the missionary in China, and thence to deduce in the later ones the natural development of the methods of mission work. But in the prescribed limits this could only be done in a very imperfect way. Several important forms of work have been hardly touched on. Especially I should have wished to dwell on the notable work of the Women's Missionary Association through the ladies of its own staff, and through the wives of the missionaries; on the Medical Mission; and on the details of educational work. Without these features the picture, even as an outline, is very incomplete.

Again, I have throughout spoken only of the work of the English Presbyterian Mission. But in the Swatow district we have a band of fellow-workers in the Mission of the American Baptist Union. Their work would have called for description had I attempted to give a full account of mission agencies in this

field. So, too, other Missions throughout China present many features of interest, and we continually learn from each other. The evils due to the presence of "rival sects" on the mission field, if they exist, have not fallen largely under my notice. I believe they are greatly exaggerated by "candid" critics of missions. On the field we seldom think of each other as rivals but gladly recognise each other as helpers. Differences of organisation and administration yield varieties of experience, which add to the common stock of knowledge, widening our views and improving our methods. We "consider one another," not in jealousy, but to provoke ourselves to imitation of the good we see in the work of others.

I have not cumbered the pages of this book by giving detailed references to authors to whom I am indebted. In quoting from the Chinese classics I have followed the English versions of Dr Legge, though I have sometimes changed a word or phrase where there seemed to be any reason for doing so.

I have to thank my colleagues, Rev. W. Riddel, M.D., for kindly drawing for me the map, on a novel principle, which accompanies this volume, and Rev. T. Barclay, Formosa, for the use of some of his photographs. To my friend Professor J. Denney, D.D., I owe a deep debt of gratitude for his extreme kindness in arranging for the publication of this volume, and in undertaking the tedious labour of reading the proofs and seeing the book through the press.

Recent events have redoubled the urgency of the demand for more men for mission service. But it cannot be too earnestly urged that the men wanted are those whom the Home Churches can least spare; men of thorough education and deep-rooted enthusiasm, with faith and insight to work unwearied for far results; who in tone, training, and temper, shall fitly represent and transmit to others the finest attainments of the Christian spirit. May God send such men! If this book should help to draw their hearts towards China, its purpose will be fulfilled.

J. C. G.

SWATOW,
14th February 1901.

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MISSION PROBLEMS AND MISSION METHODS IN SOUTH CHINA

LECTURE I

THE PROVING OF THE GOSPEL

THE subject of these lectures is "Evangelistic Theology," but I do not propose to treat it from a theological point of view. I shall take for granted the great theological foundations on which we rest the theory of Missions. The subject for discussion might be more briefly described by one word, "Evangelistics." I assume that you recognise yourselves to be not only favoured possessors of the Gospel, but to be also its responsible custodians—stewards of the manifold grace of God. Assuming that we have the true Evangel ourselves, we have to discuss its application to men.

How are men to be reached by it? Who are the objects of mission work? What characteristics and features do they present, and how far do these determine the ways by which they are to be approached? What are the methods actually in use on the mission field, and to what criticisms do they lie open? How may they be improved, or corrected, or more amply utilised? What are the results thus far of what has been done, and what are the prospects for the future?

For yourselves in particular, as students of theology, there will always run parallel with these discussions the question, What is the bearing of these things on personal

life and duty? But I shall regard it as your business, rather than mine, to make the personal application.

I propose further to limit the subjects discussed by taking China as a typical mission field, and Chinese Missions, or still more definitely, the Mission to which I belong, as a sample of what is being done.

There is often a lurking uneasiness on the subject of Missions in the minds of Christian people at home; perhaps an impression that if missionaries could only be got to speak with complete candour, there would be some abatement of enthusiasm, or even a confession of substantial failure.

Now, I hope to speak to you with perfect candour of difficulties, drawbacks, discouragements, dangers; but these in no way lessen the confidence with which I say once for all at the outset that the whole result of my experience in mission work as I have seen it is thoroughly satisfactory. Not that we are satisfied, but a crucial experiment has been made. We know now what can be done and can predict results. What has been already accomplished gives ample ground for wonder, thankfulness, and hope. No missionary should be satisfied, but few missionaries need be, and few are, disappointed. The justification of this assertion will appear as we go on. My aim is not to offer you an apologetic of missions, but to note observations, to analyse and criticise them, so as to put the actual state of things in one mission field definitely before you, for the quickening of interest and zeal, and the confirmation of faith.

Of faith, because when you discuss the success or failure of missions far profounder interests are at stake than the inquirers generally suppose. For when we carry the Gospel to heathen men—using the term provisionally—we are no doubt making an experiment; but what we are putting to the proof is not a scheme of a few enthusiasts, nor an optional off-shoot of Church work. We are putting to the proof the Gospel itself. Are men

in the world in truth in the needy case in which the Gospel asserts them to be? Is the Gospel a fitting remedy which in practice is found to meet their need? Are men to-day, in fact, so held under the power of sin that they need a Saviour? Is Christ found, in practice, to be an actual Saviour, able to set them free?

In theology you may debate such subjects as matters of argument, relying on the authority of Scripture, but in mission work no theological assumption will be of any avail. You go to make actual experiment in the living world of men. The experiment may, in particular cases, be vitiated by mistakes of method or manipulation, without shutting you up to any more startling result than that those concerned have been unwise or incompetent. But now that so many missions have been carried on for so long, in so many ways, by so many men of all varieties of type, if the broad result has been failure the inference must be a far more vital one. In physical science experiment is the putting to nature of regulated crucial questions. Missions are an experiment in which the question put is: "Does the Gospel work?" Or, to go closer to the heart of the matter, the question is neither more nor less than this: "Is Christ the Saviour of men, or is He not?" Therefore, when men say, "Do you believe in missions?" I reply, "Do you believe in Christ?" For assuredly, if broadly and on the whole missions are a failure, then not only is our preaching vain, but your faith is also vain. Be assured that the Christ who cannot save a Chinaman in longitude 117° East, is a Christ who cannot save you in longitude 3° West.

The question about missions would not be so lightly put, nor the answer so lightly listened to, if men realised that what is at stake is not a mere scheme of us missionaries, but the validity of their own hope of eternal life. Yet I am bound to say that the questions put to me on returning from the mission field by professedly Christian

people, often shake my faith, not in missions, but in their Christian profession. What kind of grasp of the Gospel have men got, who doubt whether it is to-day, under any skies, the power of God unto salvation?

I am not satisfied with the scale on which mission work is done. I am not certain that our methods are in many respects the best possible. I am far from being satisfied with the results yet attained. But an experiment has been made, a preliminary experiment, if you will, and in proportion to the effort made, to the time spent, to the workers employed, the result is not only adequate but surprising. In this sense I say that the impression resulting from what I have seen of mission work is thoroughly satisfactory. It presents to us the strongest confirmation of the word of the Gospel. There is no more convincing demonstration of the reality of the work of the Holy Spirit than the things that may be seen to-day on the mission field.

Church history can do much to confirm Christian faith. The long story of the Church's growth, the roll of her martyrs, the record of her triumphs, the accumulated glories of her literature and her theology—these things illustrate and confirm her faith and hope; but to appreciate them we must search far into a forgotten, if not a dead past, and by an effort of imagination project ourselves into scenes which we can only imperfectly realise.

But on the mission field, especially perhaps in China, the Church and the world of eighteen hundred years ago spring again into life and reality. The Chinese Dragon Flag takes the place of the Roman Eagles. Consuls, proconsuls, prætors, deputies, move across the scene in the persons of Chinese mandarins. The indifferent Gallio, Demetrius, the crafty maker of shrines, and Alexander, the provoking copper-smith, are our next door neighbours. The places of St Paul and St Peter of Timothy and Titus,

are poorly filled by the modern missionary, but Lydia again listens to the new Gospel, and plants afresh the Church of Christ. The Stoic philosophers encounter us once more in the market-place, muttering the question "What would these babblers say?" and dismiss us with their polite but chilling formula, "We will hear thee again of this matter." Some cleave to us, and though Dionysius, the Areopagite, is not often among them, the woman named Damaris is a familiar figure, and the photograph of the beloved Persis, with her bound feet, her quaint old walking-staff, and her Chinese Bible, hangs on my study wall, and is a daily stimulus to patient and faithful work. Euodias and Syntyche still need to be reconciled, and exhorted to be of one mind, while Priscilla and Aquila, Amplias and Stachys, Apelles the approved, and Rufus the chosen, with Clement also, and others whose names are in the Book of Life, are still our fellow-workers, and fill up the rolls of membership of our native church. Phygellus and Hermogenes still disappoint us, and Hymenæus and Alexander have sometimes to be cut off from the fellowship of the Church. Most perplexing of all are the John Marks among our preachers who still make trouble in Mission Councils by the unexplained fits of faint-heartedness which chequer their terms of useful service.

The Plea of Athenagoras and the Epistle to Diognetus are living and real on the mission field, and the Book of the Acts of the Apostles is for us not so much a record of the past as a picture of the present, and a hand-book for daily use.

I have often wished that some Professor of Church History, at home in the early Church, and familiar with the mission field of to-day, would give us a vivid picture of the first three centuries interpreted by the modern mission.

So Church history lives again before our eyes. We

seem to be living 1800 years ago, and the mission field, so far from being the death-scene of a forlorn hope, is the vantage ground of the final apologetic of the Christian faith.

In what has been said I have anticipated some points which must be treated in detail later on. I have done so in order to put before you these two propositions at the outset :—

(1) That in dealing with missions in China one's task is to analyse a success and deduce its lessons, not to explain away a failure.

(2) That the vital centre of all mission problems in China is the Native Church, and that to deal with these we must fix attention on its planting and its growth.

The proof of these propositions will appear as we go on. Meantime let them stand as guides to fix our point of view.

If missions be regarded as an experiment in the efficiency of the Gospel, we shall have to discuss the conditions of the experiment, the experiment itself, and its results.

It is thus necessary, in the first place, to give you a sketch of China and Chinese life as constituting the conditions of our experiment. In doing so I must ask your patient attention to a subject which is in itself so wide and complex that it cannot be made altogether easy.

Imagine yourself on board ship, and nearing China. If you approach its central parts by way of Shanghai, you will notice that many hours before you arrive the deep blue of the open sea gives place to a lighter and greener shade, and that in turn to a muddy yellow. That muddy water gives the clue to the physical structure of the country, and the physical features have conditioned the industrial and social life of the people. The mud tells of far-off mountains, great rivers, and wide plains. Much of it has come from the great mountains of Western

China, 1500 miles from the sea. It has been carried down by the rains into the waters of the Yang-tsze, which runs from its sources in Thibet a course of 3000 miles to the ocean. Only the finer particles carried along by it reach the sea, the greater part being deposited along its course to build up and fertilise with virgin soil the broad plains, which constitute the greater part of the Empire, and support the bulk of its population. China is bounded on the west by the great mountain barrier which rises to the high table-lands of Thibet. From these run out towards the east two great mountain ranges, the northern and the southern. These ranges divide the Empire into three great river basins—the plain of the Yellow River, the valley of the Yang-tsze, and the plains of the Southern Provinces of Canton and Kwang-si, traversed by the eastern and western branches of the Pearl River.

From the dawn of history population has followed the lines of the great river systems. Four of these were the cradles of civilisation from four to two thousand years before the Christian era. The great Nile Valley was the home in which arose and flourished the high culture of the Egyptian Empire. The civilisation of Assyria and Babylonia was nourished by the waters and the plains of the Euphrates and the Tigris, while the great valley of the Indus was the early home of the Aryan race.

Round these great river basins and the social and political systems which grew up and flourished in them, gathers the great bulk of what in Europe we call ancient history. But outside of these is the story of a great race which history has hitherto almost entirely ignored. The banks of the Yellow River and the Yang-tsze early became the home of a vigorous branch of some primitive stock. Their origin and early history is lost in antiquity, though some startling suggestions have been thrown out to supply the gap.

We comment severely on the Philistinism with which they have for so many centuries shut themselves out from the brotherhood of nations, and too often forget that we have ourselves been constantly guilty of the same Philistinism both in literature and in religion. I have seen fine schemes of prophecy in which men undertook to explain the purposes of God in relation to man and history, while one-fourth or one-third of the human race were calmly left out of the account; and books which complacently discuss universal history and ancient literature, while the largest, if not the greatest literature of all, with the longest and most varied history, is wholly ignored.

Whatever the genealogy of the Chinese people may be, we find in their early history as recorded by themselves the usual phenomena, but on a bolder and grander scale than usual.

We have a fabulous age, which covers any period up to two or three million years before Christ, or, as the Chinese say, before Confucius. But the stories of this period are unanimously rejected by all intelligent and sober Chinese writers.

Then follows a legendary age in which loom up great heroic figures of whom it has been not unjustly said that to have had, or even to have invented, such progenitors and heroes is a token of the greatness of the race. With the latest heroes of this epoch, Yao and Shun, we are already approaching firm historic ground.

The doings and utterances of these two hero kings form the principal subject of the first two parts of the "Shoo-King," that is, the "Book of Documents," of which I shall have occasion to speak afterwards as one of the most important of the classical books. These records were evidently written long after the period to which they relate, but there is every reason to believe that they give a faithful report of a traditional history which is genuine in its main features, and there are fragments

embodied in some of these documents which carry internal evidence of their primitive origin.

The history becomes somewhat definite and reliable when we reach the time of Thang the Successful, who in 1766 B.C. overthrew in battle the last ruler of the preceding dynasty, and himself assumed the sovereignty. You may therefore place the beginning of authentic Chinese history in the middle of the eighteenth century B.C., with the establishment of the rule of Thang the Successful, who assumed for his house the style of the Shang dynasty.

But in the latter portions of the Book of Documents, especially in the section containing the documents of the kingdom, or rather dynasty, of Chow, we have history embodied in contemporary records. The dynasty of Chow was founded in 1122 B.C., and its history can be learned from State papers and public documents which were put on record while the things to which they refer were still fresh in men's minds. But the records of this period, authentic as they are, are still fragmentary, and leave much to be desired both in continuity and completeness. We must pass over a further interval of 350 years before we reach the point at which clear and continuous history begins. We are then about the middle of the period covered by the dynasty of Chow, which was the reigning house for about 870 years—from 1122 B.C. to 255 B.C.

When continuous history begins we are almost in sight of the great classic age of Chinese literature, the times of the two great philosophers, Confucius and Mencius. They were both men of the kingdom of Chow, and their lives, with an interval of a century between them, covered a period beginning in 551 B.C., and ending in 289 B.C. Thirty years after the death of Mencius the kingdom of Chow passed into its decay.

With this general glance at the course of the early ages

of Chinese history, let us return to the period about two thousand years before the Christian era, when the ancestors of the Chinese people seem to have entered the country from the north-west along the banks of the Yellow River. We have many striking sketches of their primitive life in two of the earliest of the Chinese classics, the "Book of Documents," already referred to, and the "Book of Odes." The period covered by these works is a long one, but there is little reason to suppose that there was any rapid change in political life or social customs in those early days, and much of the life depicted both in the "Odes" and the "Documents" must represent very nearly the state of things two thousand years before Christ. The China of those days included only a limited area on either bank of the Yellow River, equivalent to less than four of the eighteen or nineteen provinces of which the Empire is now composed. At a much later date than that of which I am now speaking, in the best days of the Chow dynasty, the population did not exceed twelve or thirteen millions. In the dawn of their history the Chinese seem to have been a pastoral people who followed in their migrations the course of the river, driving their herds and flocks before them. Settlements were gradually formed in the line of march while the growing population moved onwards towards the sea. They lived in those days largely by hunting and fishing, using nets for both purposes, and also bows and lines, and making fish ponds for fish cultivation. In China, as elsewhere, the arts of hunting and fishing have diminished in importance as agriculture has gradually supplanted them, but both are in common use to this day, and along the coast-line fishing is the main industry of a very large proportion of the people.

Very early in the "Odes" we find the nomadic chiefs, who wandered about seeking pasturage for their flocks and herds, beginning to settle down and becoming tillers of the soil. Here is a picture of these early migrations

as given in one of the "Odes," with a sketch of the process which must have been repeated many times all over the country when the foundations of the Chinese Empire were beginning to be laid.

"The ancient Duke Than-fu
Came in the morning, galloping his horses
Along the banks of the Western rivers,
To the foot of Mount Khi;
And there he and the Lady Kiang
Came, and together looked for a site.

"The plain of Chow looked beautiful and rich
With its violets and sow-thistles sweet as cakes.
There he began by consulting his followers
There he divined by singeing the tortoise shell.
The responses were, there to stay and then;
And there they proceeded to build their houses.

"He called his master of works,
He called his minister of instruction,
He charged them with the building of the houses.
With the line they made everything straight;
They bound the frame-boards tight to hold the earth,
Uprose the ancestral temple in its solemn grandeur.

"Crowds brought the earth in baskets,
They threw it with shouts into the frames,
They beat it with resounding blows;
They scraped the walls till they rang again,
Five thousand cubits of them rose together
The roll of the drum did not overpower the sounds of building."

We have here a glimpse of the religion of these early settlers. They began with divination, and amongst their earliest buildings was the ancestral temple. These primitive settlements grew into petty states which long after, and through many changes, combined to form the Chinese Empire of to-day. As the pastoral nomads who formed them abandoned their wandering life they gradually became cultivators of the soil. They sowed, as now, rice,

wheat, barley, buck-wheat and millet, and tilled them with hoe and plough; and when the harvest was gathered with the sickle, the poor were not forgotten. Even while the pastoral and nomadic life still lingered, they had already begun to acquire the arts which mark a higher stage in civilisation. They possessed skill in working copper, tin and iron, and in making tools and weapons of war. They carved ivory, and cut and polished gems. They made instruments of music in considerable variety, guitars, flutes, cymbals, drums, and even organs in which metallic reeds vibrated in the orifices of tubes. They cultivated the silkworm and understood the arts of weaving and embroidery.

Like most primeval peoples their imaginations were captivated by the starry sky overhead, and the "Odes" abound in astronomical allusions. The arts of agriculture were discovered, according to their traditions, by How Tsi, the heaven-taught husbandman. His miraculous birth and the dangers through which he passed as an outcast infant, form the subject of some of the early legends. He was protected by the birds, and as a boy learned to amuse himself by sowing the seeds of hemp and beans. As he watched their growth and learned the secrets of their culture he became the founder of agriculture, and is honoured as the great patron of all who till the soil.

The Chinese divide society into four great classes, which they arrange in order of dignity in this way: first, the scholar; then the farmer; third, the artizan; and last of all, the merchant. This fundamental conception of the framework of society must be kept clearly in view by all who wish to understand China. A lettered class to govern, and a humble body of agriculturalists to obey—that is the Chinese ideal of a peaceful and settled society. By a pleasant fiction the lettered man is supposed by his learning to be fitted to take the command by land or sea, and to become general or admiral as the necessities of

disturbed times may require. The class of scholars is thus understood to include and overshadow the military class, and though degrees are given both to civil and to military students, the military degrees, rank for rank, are always much less esteemed than the corresponding degrees on the civil side of the public service. The second place in social standing is allotted to the cultivator of the soil, because he is the producer of the people's food. He is in touch with the benevolent productive forces of nature, and by his humble toil is the great benefactor of his people. This view of the dignity of agriculture is accentuated by a great annual ceremony of state, in which the Emperor himself ploughs a furrow with his own hands in the presence of his Ministers. The artificer is a producer in a minor sense, and holds the third place only, while the merchant is relegated to the lowest place of all. This view of society is probably not so much a result of political theorising, as a natural survival of the conditions of life which are described in the early literature, and out of which the Empire grew.

Its growth was slow and complex, and passed through many vicissitudes. European writers usually represent China as a vast inert mass of humanity, which has remained unchanged for thousands of years, devoid of all living impulse from within, and dead to all impression from without. The truth is that the imagined stolidity of China is largely a figment devised by Western ignorance. As the old geographers wrote over the interior of great continents the word "Desert," only because they did not know what else to write, so have historians and even philosophers dealt with China. Vast spaces of historic time have been bridged over with the convenient formula, "Immovable stolidity," and men have not paused to consider whether it was possible that a people could have continued to exist on these terms in a world that is dynamic in all its parts.

In China, as elsewhere, two great factors have always been at work: the restless passions of the human heart, and the unsleeping providence of God. Chinese history is as rich as any other in precious material for the student of human nature. The enormous length of the story, the complexity of its details, and the difficulty of the language in which it is recorded, have hitherto deterred the European student. A beginning has been made, but the great bulk of the historical material which forms a main department of Chinese literature is still untouched. It will be impossible to trace here the process by which the pastoral tribes of 4000 years ago became the consolidated Chinese Empire of to-day. I will only indicate two or three of the principal steps in the transition.

The pastoral tribes who settled in primitive times along the banks of the Yellow River gradually formed themselves into a series of small states. They were all of one race, and, being surrounded by nomadic tribes of other stocks, they banded themselves together for mutual protection. By degrees a feudal system was evolved, reaching its full development during the Chow dynasty, which acquired the sovereignty about 1100 years before the Christian era, and lasted for 900 years. During this period the Chinese territory was divided into a number of principalities, each of which was allotted to a feudal prince. These princes exercised an independent jurisdiction within their own territories, wielding the power of life and death over their subjects, and regulating the distribution of their lands. At the same time one of the states was recognised as the central or leading power. Its ruler, besides exercising authority over his own state, wielded a suzerainty over all the others. From them he drew an annual revenue, and could call on them for military service when it was required. He was assisted in his imperial duties by a council of high officers whose authority extended over all the allied states. At regular intervals, at first of

five years, and afterwards of twelve years, the sovereign or emperor made a tour of inspection through all the states to see for himself that the government was properly carried on. He and his ministers regulated all matters of common interest, defining the ceremonies of religious worship, the laws of war, and the arrangements for trade. As might be expected, the system worked well when the central power was in the hands of a strong and wise ruler; but it left great room for rivalry and dissension when the central power was weak.

This system of a central sovereignty over a group of tributary states gives the explanation of the name by which the Chinese usually call their country to this day, —that is, "The Middle Kingdom." This name has often been a ground of boasting to the Chinese, and a ground of offence to Europeans, but both parties have been mistaken in their interpretation of it. It has been supposed to imply that China is the centre of the habitable world, and that all other countries form a fringe of barbarism round its remote circumference. Chinese maps are constructed on this theory. Nearly the whole area is occupied by a square or rectangular space inscribed "The Middle Kingdom." It is surrounded on all sides by water which is called "The Four Seas," and on the outer margin of these seas a number of islands are indicated. These are called "The Islands of the Barbarians." Not unnaturally, the despised foreigner feels aggrieved to hear that China presumes to call herself "The Middle Kingdom," to the evident disparagement of all others.

In truth both parties are mistaken, and the name is an interesting survival from the old feudal days. Then "The Middle Kingdom" was the central and sovereign power of an associated group or confederation of states; and when the group was afterwards consolidated into a single empire, the name of the "predominant partner" was naturally enough applied to the whole.

The inherent weakness of the system of feudal states, and the endless rivalries which grew out of it, ultimately brought this old political arrangement to an end shortly before the close of the Chow dynasty about three hundred years before the Christian era.

Amidst the confusion which followed there arose one of those strong characters who leave a deep and permanent mark in history. He was king or prince of the kingdom of Ts'in, which had been growing in power as that of Chow declined. He attacked the rival kingdoms one by one, and having overcome all the more powerful ones he combined the whole under one government, himself assuming the title of Emperor, instead of that of King, which had hitherto been borne even by the ruler of the central state. He divided his territory into thirty-six provinces, and appointed three great officers to govern each province. To mark emphatically the passing away of the old system he ordered that all existing copies of the classical books should be burned; and when the scholars of the Empire failed to obey this order, he put to death four hundred and sixty of them. To secure his territory against the barbarous tribes of the north he built the well-known Great Wall.

Thus the Chinese Empire was founded about two hundred years before the Christian era, substantially in the form which it retains to this day. The dynasty of its founder was short-lived, and the Empire soon passed into other hands. Intervals of division and frequent outbreaks of local or dynastic rivalries have chequered the course of China's history, but throughout them all she has remained a consolidated Empire with a continuous history. Intrigue, massacre, war, and revolution have shaken or changed her government and desolated her territory times without number, but they have not interrupted the current of her national life.

The last great revolution, which introduced the present

political system, was the defeat of China by the Tartars of Manchuria in 1644, the second year of the Westminster Assembly. A widespread insurrection had overthrown the ruling dynasty. The leader of the insurrection seized Peking, and was on the point of seating himself upon the Imperial throne, when an adherent of the old regime invited the ruling House of the neighbouring kingdom of Manchuria to intervene against the usurper. The Manchurian Government, which had long had designs against China, willingly accepted the invitation. They immediately entered China, drove the usurper from Peking, and after a long and severe campaign which raged from the borders of Manchuria to beyond the Burman frontier, firmly established themselves in possession of the Empire. Removing their capital from Manchuria to Peking, they placed a Manchu prince upon the throne, and so established the Manchu dynasty, which has now held rule for two hundred and fifty years.

The seat of government remains at Peking, where it was first established in 1421 A.D. The Emperor is assisted in affairs of State by a Cabinet or Council of high officers. The public service is divided into six departments under the charge of the six Boards—Works, War, Punishments, Ceremonies, Civil Office, and Revenue.

Many of the anomalies of Chinese policy which are a constant puzzle to the western mind, are due to the fact that the Chinese have, with great political sagacity, avoided the mistake of a too highly centralised government. The Empire is divided into eighteen provinces, each of which, though subject to the Imperial rule, has a complete government of its own. In five cases two provinces, and in one case three, are combined under the rule of a Viceroy, while the others are administered by Provincial Governors. Each province has, besides, its Provincial Treasurer, Judge, Salt Commissioner and Grain Comptroller, with a separate military organisation, and

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raises and administers its own revenue, subject only to the payment of a fixed contribution to the Imperial revenue. Under the high provincial authorities each province is divided into a number of circuits, which are further sub-divided into prefectures, the prefectures into sub-prefectures, and these again into smaller local divisions. Each of these circuits, prefectures, sub-prefectures, and divisions has its local civil officer of corresponding rank. No distinction is made between civil and criminal courts, and litigants or accused persons can appeal from any of these magistrates to the next higher, and, in theory at least, there is an ultimate appeal to the Emperor himself. But Peking is far off, expenses are heavy, and for the bulk of the people this appeal is of little avail.

Besides carrying on the administration of justice, the provincial authorities, with the assistance of military officers, are responsible also for the defence of their own territory. Thus each province has all the apparatus of local government, both civil and military. Local rebellions, and even foreign wars when military operations are limited in their range, are rather looked upon as being directed against the provincial government concerned than as affecting the Empire. Thus many shocks of war and rebellion which under a more highly centralised system might have been fatal to the Imperial Government, have passed off as merely local and temporary disturbances, without any disastrous effect. When necessary, the Imperial dignity can be salved by the dismissal of an unsuccessful Viceroy, who thus becomes the scapegoat of the Empire, and saves the throne from loss of prestige.

Under this system of combined central and local government the Chinese Empire has for two centuries and a half attained a large measure of solidity and permanence. Apparently immobile, it has a real plasticity which in the past has enabled it to adapt itself to the stress of changing circumstance. Western observers

who speak of it as immovably rigid, doomed to fall to pieces as soon as change becomes inevitable, do so in ignorance of the lesson taught by the whole trend of Chinese history. Change is never welcome for its own sake to the Chinese mind. But, when change becomes inevitable, there is no people that can anticipate it with more wary caution, or assimilate it with more success than the Chinese.

What is lacking to China is neither mental capacity nor political adaptability. These great qualities have been displayed on the largest scale and in the most varied development throughout her long history. What she lacks is the solid basis of moral character. Those who have seen a photograph, taken at the door of Hawarden, of Mr Gladstone and the great Chinese Grand Secretary, Li Hung-chang, can read in it the answer to the question why China with all her greatness is yet so weak. Look on this picture and on that. The one face is cut deep by the strong pure lines of hard thinking, long watchfulness, and ceaseless toil for the good of others; the other is stamped by the shifty cunning of a selfish soul, gifted with powers which might have served his country, but have always been devoted first and chiefly to his own gain.

This is the canker that turns into weakness all the apparent strength of China. It is partly a matter of individual character, partly of a vicious system. It is a remarkable blot on the administrative system which I have described that the officials of various ranks are not paid a fixed salary. In theory, the public examinations, open to all, are the gate of official life, and the poorest man who by merit takes his degree may rise to the highest posts in the public service. In fact, every office is bought by its holder, who pays a heavy fee to his immediate superior. It is held for only three years, and the first thought of the official is usually how he may recoup

himself with a handsome profit within his term of office. Drawing no salary, he makes up his revenue partly from legitimate taxes and fees, but his heaviest gains come from illegitimate sources; excessive exactions, considerations for condoning offences against the law, the acceptance of direct and indirect bribes, and the systematic sale of the whole machinery of justice. The boasted provision of our Magna Charta, in which our sovereigns say, "To no man will we sell, or deny, or delay, right or justice," seems to have been precisely reversed in China. Justice is delayed, denied, and sold to every man in turn.

This, and not the aggression of foreign powers, is the secret of China's weakness. Her people are alienated, and have no interest in supporting the Government. Her officers are always ready to betray any public interest for private gain.

For this reason the hope of China in the present crisis of her history lies in the young Christian Church which is growing up within her borders. If it can root itself securely and so grow in healthy life as to produce in good measure the fruits of holy living and character, China may yet be saved. Her present position, like many of her institutions, presents a curiously close parallel with the history of the Roman Empire in the early Christian centuries. We may transfer to China with great fitness the following words of Gibbon: "A candid inquiry into the progress and establishment of Christianity may be considered as a very essential part of the story of the Roman Empire. While that great body was invaded by open violence, or undermined by slow decay, a pure and humble religion gently insinuated itself into the minds of men, grew up in silence and obscurity, derived new vigour from opposition, and finally erected the triumphant banner of the Cross on the ruins of the Capitol." That is our programme for China, with one great difference. We do not wish to plant the

banner of the Cross on any ruins. We wish to plant it rather in the centre of China's life, that round it may rally, or out of it may spring, all those elements of purity and goodness which shall make for her a new and bright future, a future greater than her great past, in which she shall no longer sit apart in a sullen self-containedness, but shall take her part in the comity of the nations, and bring to the service of the whole human race those great natural powers which are the traditional inheritance of her people, purified, elevated, and quickened by the vitalising breath of the religion and the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Whether this ideal can be realised is a question worth solving. It puts the Gospel to the test on a worthy scale. For out there the great issue is tried with all external helps removed. The Gospel goes to China with no subsidiary aids. It is spoken to the people by the stammering lips of aliens. Those who accept it do so with no prospect of temporal gain. They go counter to all their own pre-conceptions, and to all the prejudices of their people. Try as we may to become all things to all men, we can but little accommodate our teaching to their thought. To a people to whom the supernatural is but a dim terror, we preach that God is near and that God is love. Where the struggle for life is sore and keen, we preach that men should take no thought for the morrow. Where "Every man for his own," is the rule of life, we preach that a man should love his neighbour as himself. Where the one deep-seated moral conviction remaining in men's minds is the certainty of moral retributions in this life, we preach the free forgiveness of sins. Often and often have I looked into the faces of a crowd of non-Christian Chinese and felt keenly how many barriers lay between their minds and mine. Reasoning that seems to me conclusive makes no appeal to them. Even the words which we use to convey religious ideas

do not bear to their minds one-hundredth part of the meaning we wish to put into them. I have often thought that if I were to expend all my energies to persuade one Chinaman to change the cut of his coat, or to try some new experiment in agriculture, I should certainly plead in vain. And yet I stand up to beg him to change the habits of a lifetime, to break away from the whole accumulated outcome of heredity, to make himself a target for the scorn of the world in which he lives, to break off from the consolidated social system which has shaped his being, and on the bare word of an unknown stranger to plunge into the hazardous experiment of a new and untried life, to be lived on a moral plane still almost inconceivable to him, whose sanctions and rewards are higher than his thoughts as heaven is higher than the earth. While I despair of inducing him by my reasonings to make the smallest change in the least of his habits, I ask him, not with a light heart, but with a hopeful one, to submit his whole being to a change that is for him the making of his whole world anew. "*Credo quia impossibile.*" I believe it can be done because I know I cannot do it, and the smallest success is proof of the working of divine power. The missionary must either confess himself helpless, or he must to the last fibre of his being believe in the Holy Ghost. I choose to believe, nay I am shut up to believe, by what my eyes have seen. I do not mean that one sees the results of preaching directly on the spot. In China at least one seldom does. But by the power of God the results come. We have seen unclean lives made pure, the broken-hearted made glad, the false and crooked made upright and true, the harsh and cruel made kindly and gentle. I have seen old men and women, seventy, eighty, eighty-five years of age, throwing away the superstitions of a lifetime, the accumulated merit of years of toilsome and expensive worship, and when almost on the brink of the grave,

venturing all upon a new preached faith and a new found Saviour. We have seen the abandoned gambler become a faithful and zealous preacher of the Gospel. We have seen the poor giving out of their poverty help to others poorer still. We see many Chinese Christians who were once narrow and avaricious, giving out of their hard-earned means a month's wages, or more, yearly, to help the Church's work. We see dull and uneducated people drinking in new ideas, mysteriously growing in their knowledge of Christian truth, and learning to shape their lives by its teachings. We have seen proud, passionate men, whose word was formerly law in their village, submit to injury, loss and insult, because of their Christian profession, until even their enemies were put to shame by their gentleness, and were made to be at peace with them. And the men and women and children who are passing through these experiences are gathering in others, and building up one by one a Christian community, numbering now over 20,000 in connection with our own Mission alone, which is becoming a power on the side of all that is good in the non-Christian communities around them.

At home, there might be some hesitation about the interpretation of things like these. In a Christian country many natural virtues simulate the appearance of Christian graces. But in a country like China we have the advantage of seeing what the Gospel can do when all the external conditions are unfavourable. Heredity, custom, education, social influence, public opinion, and popular ideals are all solid against the entrance of the Gospel. If it roots itself and grows there, then the miracle is undeniable. In the exuberance of a "careless-ordered garden," the presence in many a forgotten corner of rare blossoms is no great wonder; but when a blossom of conspicuous beauty and rare fragrance is found growing in some dry and desert spot, then we know that the power of loving nurture has prevailed over the killing

force of adverse conditions. So when you see truth and purity, love and honour, generosity and tenderness, self-denial and unworldly faith, springing to blossom and setting to fruit in a moral soil like that of China, with the heavens overhead as brass, and the earth as iron beneath, while the very atmosphere seems heavy and foul with heathenism all around—when you see these things, you must say, "The finger of God is here." We recognise the unmistakable husbandry of God, and one feels that it is worth while to be a missionary, were it only in order to see for one's self at first hand the authentic working of His Spirit. The mission field has its great rewards, and perhaps the chief of them is the strong confirmation of faith which its scenes afford.

There is no reason why you should not share in these rich rewards. By love, by knowledge, by sympathy, by prayer, you can put yourselves in touch with mission fields. It will be my privilege to put before you the Foreign Mission as an ideal sphere of Christian service, worthy of the highest ambitions of Christian students. If you should give your life-work to it, you may find the best apologetic and the final vindication of the Christian faith, not in the learning which you gather within these walls, but in living epistles of Christ gathered for your comfort and salvation among poor men and simple women and little children on far-off mission fields. You may find yourselves called not only to study theology here in its latest ramifications, but to mould and shape from the beginning the theology of great churches yet to be; instead of reading the Church history of the past with a sense that the heroic ages are gone by, you may find yourselves summoned to make the happier history of coming days by shaping from the foundation the destinies of new churches, into which great races are to be gathered when the Kingdom of God shall come.

LECTURE II

CHINESE LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY

MEASURED either by duration in time, or by extent and variety of matter and style, Chinese literature is without a rival. In time it ranges over a period of over 3,600 years; in regard to matter you find in it history, poetry, biography and travels, essays, plays, State papers, novels, private letters, satires; treatises on law and music, on mathematics, cookery, philosophy and ethics; works on medicine, on military equipment and tactics, on bric-a-brac and religion; chronological tables and local topographies, encyclopedias and model letter-writers, expository commentaries and critical discussions on ancient texts; collections of ghost stories and family recipes, Imperial dictionaries and vulgar ballads; and finally, that nothing should be lacking, an index expurgatorius which qualifies the whole.

Where to begin, what path to follow through the maze, and where his tedious course may have ending, are formidable questions for the student who attempts to survey the literary monuments reared by the choicest minds of one-fourth of the human family in the ceaseless toil of thirty-six centuries.

The Chinese book language is, so far as I know, the only language in existence which possesses a living literature and yet is spoken by no one. Every Chinese author and every Chinese reader must of necessity be more or less master of two languages. The language of books is a literary vehicle which has come down with little change from remote antiquity as the common

possession of the whole of China. But it is not spoken by the people, nor even by scholars, anywhere, and it is almost certain that it never was spoken. Every part of the country has its own vernacular, which is the spoken language of all classes of society, and peasant with peasant, and scholar with scholar alike, carries on all his conversation in the mother tongue which is indigenous to his native region.

The book language is the only living specimen of the Hieroglyphic or Ideographic systems of writing, and is by far the most ingenious, elaborate, and complete of them all.

In China, as elsewhere, the spoken language must have existed before the written, but in China the written language did not undertake to record the language as spoken. At first it probably did no more than what was done by the picture writing of the American Indians. Its function may be best understood by comparison with a child's picture-book. The pictures which accompany the letterpress supply to a child's mind who cannot read not only illustrations which brighten the text, but a clue or guide to the sequence and connection of the parts of the story. As you tell him the story he checks off its stages by the pictures. Afterwards, when he wishes to retell the story, being unable to help his memory from the letterpress, he guides himself by the pictures, and gives the story in the order and with the incidents figured in them. Now suppose the pictures to be increased in number but reduced to the most elementary forms, and the letterpress abolished. The rudimentary pictures would then themselves form a record which could be read with substantial accuracy, though with variations of expression, by anyone who had once heard the story told; but they could not be read by anyone to whom the story was wholly unknown. Something like this must have been the nature of the picture writing used by

savage races. The figure of a few footprints, with perhaps an arrow beside them, would indicate a warlike expedition ; the curved lines of flowing water with the outline of a canoe might indicate crossing a river ; the outline of a few tents would signify an encampment ; and a rude sketch of some bodies would indicate a battle, and might show its result and the number of the slain. The signs vividly recall the story, but they give only its principal points, and all the filling-up must be done by the reader, and by him can be given correctly only from memory after having heard the story told : but they suffice to help his memory, and to keep him from omitting, inverting, or falsifying the incidents.

Similar to this was the origin of the Chinese written language. It was, so to speak, a reproduction of the pictures by which the story is made vivid, rather than of the words in which it is fully told. It consisted at first of a few pictures reduced in a conventional way to their barest elements. Such words as man, sun, moon, mountain, stream, tree, fish, horse, etc., were written in the form of a small outline sketch of the object intended. Upon these simple forms were built up others to express more abstract or more complex ideas ; as the sun and moon put together represent brightness ; a tree with the sun seen through it represents the East, where the low sun appears shining through the branches.

The written language was at first very imperfect, possessing only substantives, and perhaps a few verbs and adjectives. Particles, pronouns, auxiliaries, signs of tense, number or case, were all lacking, and it was the reader's business to supply the links, indeed to complete the sense as best he might. By degrees subsidiary words began to come into use, and the number of signs multiplied. Finally, as in the Egyptian hieroglyphs, the idea was reached of using some of these pictures phonetically— that is, of using them to represent other words of like

sound without regard to the original meaning of the picture, a mark being generally added to indicate this phonetic use.

These principles have given us the ample stores of the Chinese characters, of which some six thousand are in common use, and not less than forty thousand are to be found in the Imperial dictionary.

Every word has a separate character, many single characters requiring from fifteen to thirty distinct strokes of the pen in writing. Many of them contain in their forms a slight clue to their sound, or to their meaning, but the clue is slight and unreliable, and practically each one must be separately learned from a teacher or a dictionary, and must be retained by a sheer effort of memory.

A language so difficult as this remains of necessity the peculiar possession of a privileged class, and the bulk of the people can neither read nor write. In a country which imagines itself to be the only literary country upon earth, and which contains a population of three hundred and fifty millions, there are not thirteen millions of readers, and most probably not more than half that number.

But to those who do acquire it a whole world of life and interest is thrown open, and in pursuing the study they come under a peculiar fascination.

The characters themselves come down from pre-historic times, and have all the glamour of a hoary antiquity. The principles on which they were at first formed and the numerous changes through which they have passed, open to us vistas of old-world thought and life. The book language which has been built up by means of them has an intensely interesting history, as we trace it from the rough and elliptical fragments of its most ancient documents onwards to the picturesque force and easy grace of later antiquity, and of mediæval and modern

writers. As a literary system, the book language is a marvel of ingenuity, of subtle versatility, and condensed force. It attains a surprising variety of expression by the use of materials apparently stiff and intractable.

As I have said, the spoken language must have existed before the language of writing was invented. In the early ages it was of course by far the fuller and freer method of expression. The line of development followed by the written language left the spoken tongue almost unaffected, and the two have pursued their growth with a minimum of mutual interaction and influence. Thus has arisen in the most natural way the anomaly which seems to us in the West so mysterious, that the student of Chinese finds himself confronted by practically two languages, the spoken vernacular, and the written language or the language of books.

The vernacular is in each part of the Empire the universal language of all classes of the people, rich and poor, learned and unlearned. I have heard a mandarin of high rank speaking in his native district the very same dialect, even to its broadest local inflections, as the most unlettered peasant in the district. Thus the spoken language in different parts of the Empire not only presents dialectical variations, but almost constitutes distinct languages, some of them spoken by one or two millions of people, some by four, or six, or twelve millions, while the so-called mandarin dialect is spoken over perhaps two-thirds of the Empire, by more than two hundred millions of people. We avoid calling these vernaculars languages, out of regard to the underlying unity of all the forms of Chinese, but they differ among themselves quite as much as the various Latin languages of Europe.

The spoken language or vernacular is Cantonese in the central and western parts of the province of Canton, and the Swatow dialect in the north-eastern. It is

Hakka in parts of Canton, Fuhkien, and Kiangsi. It is the Amoy dialect in Formosa and half the Fuhkien province, and the Foochow dialect in the other half. It is Mandarin in Peking and the north, another Mandarin in Nanking and neighbouring provinces, and it is still another Mandarin of a different strain in the western provinces. It is the Shanghai dialect in Shanghai; the Ningpo in Ningpo and the neighbourhood; and the Hainan dialect in some parts of the island of Hainan. Each of these is a true vernacular, a dialect, if you will, almost a language, but not a colloquial and not a patois. Within each of these vernaculars there are colloquial and vulgar forms to be avoided in refined speech. There are also minor variations which may fall to be described as patois, but throughout each great section of the Empire the substantial unity of the mother tongue of the people constitutes it a true vernacular.

It is thus apparent that a knowledge of the local vernacular of his district is a fundamental necessity for every student of Chinese. Without it he is unable to hold any intercourse with the people, and when he proceeds to study the written language, which is common to the whole Empire, the local vernacular is still his principal instrument of study, being the only vehicle of communication with the native scholar who is the teacher, and for the time being, his ultimate authority on all literary questions.

Fundamentally important as they are, however, these vernaculars have not been cultivated as literary vehicles. None of the great works of Chinese literature are written in any of the vernaculars, although in many parts of the country there is a certain amount of local literature, usually of a low class, which is written in the vernacular of the district. This consists chiefly of songs, plays, and ballads, corresponding to the literature of the "Chap Books" of former days in our own country. These

books have a limited circulation amongst the common people, but are despised or ignored by scholars. To the foreign student, however, the study of them is of value for extending his knowledge of the vocabulary and resources of the vernacular tongue.

It is to be understood, therefore, that in speaking of Chinese literature we confine our attention to books written in the book language proper, or what is sometimes called, though inaccurately, the Classical style. Books written in this language are not understood when read aloud, whether to educated or uneducated persons. They appeal to the eye, and hardly make themselves intelligible to the ear. If a book of this class is to be read aloud, as we read the Scriptures in public worship, it is necessary for the reader to render the text, as he goes along, into the vernacular spoken by his audience. When this is done many of the principal words used in the vernacular version are identical with those which stand in the original text, but many of the words must be added, and there must often be an inversion of the order of ideas and the arrangement of the text. To give a good oral version in vernacular from a printed text requires not only a good general knowledge of the syntax and structure of the book language, and a nice discrimination of the effects of its particles, but also a ready command of good vernacular, and ability to give not merely a bald or loose paraphrase, but an apt and idiomatic version, which must be neither slip-shod nor redundant, in sentences not too long to hold the hearers' attention, and not so short as to cut the thread of the meaning. It is hardly necessary to say that skill in this exercise is not common, and that reading aloud is little practised.

The importance of the vernacular has usually been greatly underestimated by Western writers, while the adaptation of the book language for use in all parts of

the Empire, whatever the local vernacular may be, has led to an exaggerated idea of its power, and of the number of those who can read in China. In the older descriptions, China was made to appear a land of unparalleled marvels. Language, customs, productions, all were described in exaggerated language. Some vague idea of the syllabic poverty of the language was made the basis for statements such as the following, made sixty years ago by a naval surgeon, who describes himself as "having had singular opportunities for investigation." Whatever his opportunities for investigation were, he has certainly made a singular use of them. After referring to the book language, he goes on to say: "The oral tongue is much more imperfect, to such extent, that the Chinese will scarcely answer the most simple question unless it is expressed in writing. . . . This poverty of language obliges the Chinese to appear a very grave, reserved people, as they sit together frequently for a length of time without exchanging a word; and when they do speak, the sense is made out rather by observing the countenance and action of the limbs, than by regulated sounds." This extraordinary conception of a spoken language little better than a gibberish, insufficient for the purposes of daily intercourse, and eked out by the universal use of a written medium, could not, of course, be accepted by missionaries living in the country, but ideas of this kind have created in many minds an undue depreciation of the spoken languages, so much so, that the appellation of "Chinese scholar" is denied to those who only speak the vernacular, however perfectly, and is confined in its application to students of the book language, and is yielded to them even when their ability to speak and understand vernacular Chinese is very limited.

There has also been much exaggeration as to the practical use of the written language, and the number of persons who can read and write. The state of educa-

tion varies in different classes of society, in town and country, in Northern, Central, and Southern China, and it is extremely difficult to make a general estimate. Different estimates may be made also according to the view taken as to what constitutes anyone a reader. Many know the forms and sounds of a few characters, without being able to understand the meaning of a sentence in the simplest book. Tradesmen often learn a few characters used in their trade, so as to be able to read and keep accounts, and yet cannot read anything else. The true test is ability to understand a book written in a simple style upon any non-technical subject. I limit the test to non-technical books, because any work on a special subject would contain a number of unusual characters, each of which would be a stumbling-block even to a fairly good reader. Let us take the whole population at 300,000,000. Deducting from this total 25 per cent. for children under ten years of age or too young to read, we have 225,000,000 as the adult population which we have to consider. It may be taken as roughly correct that half of this number are men and half women. The women as a rule do not read. There are exceptions, and there are occasionally women distinguished for scholarship, but all cases will be covered if we estimate that of the 112,500,000 women 1 per cent., or 1,125,000 in all, are able to read. Of the 112,500,000 men it is a liberal estimate to say that 10 per cent., or 11,250,000 in all, may be reckoned as readers. Estimating in this way we reach a total number of readers not exceeding 12,375,000. Dr Martin of Peking estimates the number lower still. "It does not," he says, "according to my observation, exceed one in twenty for the male sex, and one in ten thousand for the female." This would reduce the number of readers to less than 6,000,000, and one cannot say that it is too low. If estimates like this are anything like correct, and they are based upon very ample

evidence, it is impossible to speak of the Chinese people as a whole, as a highly educated race. Literature is the possession of the few rather than of the many, but by the few its cultivation has been carried to a very high degree of perfection.

In point of time and in point of importance the first department of Chinese literature is that of the so-called "Classics." These are the recognised standard of right thinking and right action, and are the recognised field of literary acquirement and display for professional scholars of all grades throughout the Empire. Other books they may, or may not, have dipped into—these they must know by heart.

The classical books have at different times been variously enumerated, but now they are recognised as nine in number; the "Wu King," or "Five Classics," and the "Sze Shu," or "Four Books."

Let us look first at the "Five Classics." These are—

1. The "Shi King," or "Book of Odes."
2. The "Shu King," or "Book of Documents."
3. The "Li Ki," or "Record of Ritual."
4. The "Yih King," or "Book of Changes."
5. The "Ch'un Ts'iu," or "Book of Annals."

Of these only the last is the work of Confucius. The others are all of older date, though some of them passed through his hands as editor or collector, and owe to him their present form and arrangement.

The "Yih King" need not detain us. It is of great antiquity, but of doubtful interpretation, and not of much general interest. It is devoted to the exposition of certain diagrams which are ascribed to one of the legendary heroes of pre-historic times. These diagrams by their combinations of full and broken lines are supposed to give a clue to the complex changes and interactions of the elementary materials and forces of

the universe. Geomancy and superstition find here an ample field for unrestricted speculation.

The first three of these five classics are full of interest, both from their literary features and from the stores of information by which they enable us to picture to ourselves the life of ancient China long before the Christian era.

It is a convenient help to memory to say that, speaking broadly, the "Book of Odes" sets before us the social life of ancient China; the "Book of Documents" and the "Book of Annals" its political life; and the "Record of Ritual" its religious life.

The "Shi King" or "Book of Odes" consists of three hundred and eleven poems, longer and shorter, by unknown authors. Their dates can be approximately fixed, and range over eleven hundred and fifty years, the earliest belonging to about 1750 B.C., and the latest to about 600 B.C.

The greater part of this collection belongs to the period known in Chinese history as that of the Chow dynasty, which was established in 1121 B.C., and lasted till after the times of Confucius. During this period the kingdom of Chow was the central power of a group of minor states and tributary territories. Each of these had its official historians and musicians, whose duty it was to celebrate duly national events. Their writings were collected by the central kingdom of Chow with the double purpose of forming a historical record, and of keeping the central government informed of local opinion and customs, with a view to legislation for the common weal. To this wise policy we owe this collection of odes, though many more have perished in the frequent vicissitudes of Chinese history.

From the "Book of Odes" alone a tolerably complete picture could be drawn of the life and manners of the ancient Chinese. The poems touch both on private life

and public events. The scenery and images are drawn from outdoor views of starry skies, or from the incidents of country life. The age of great cities had not yet come.

For example, an officer, lamenting his hard lot and the degeneracy of the times some eight hundred years before the Christian era, contrasts with the ceaseless toil of men the serene indifference of the quiet stars—

"There is the Milky Way in heaven,
Which looks down on us in light:
Those stars in a triangle are the Weaving Ladies,
Passing daily through seven stages of the sky.

"They pass through their seven stages,
But achieve no bright work for us.
Brilliant shine the Draught Oxen,
But they do not draw our waggons.

"In the east there is Lucifer;
In the west there is Hesperus;
Long and curved is the Rabbit Net,
But they only move in their rounds.

"In the south is the Sieve,
But it is of no use to sift.
In the north is the Ladle,
But it lades out no liquor.

"In the south is the Sieve,
Idly shewing its mouth;
In the north is the Ladle,
Raising its handle to the west."

Love also has its place in this old poetry, both in its elementary form of love before marriage afraid to declare itself, and in its full development in married life.

Here is the love song of a young lady who is not yet prepared to defy public opinion for the sake of her lover

CHINESE ART: AN ORPHEUS

Chung; I fear it will disappoint you as showing more prudence than passion—

"Mr Chung, now will you please
Not come jumping o'er our hedge,
Breaking down our willow-trees;—
Not that I care much for these,
I fear my parents to displease;
Chung is dear too, in a way—
But what would my parents say?
That's what I've to fear.

"Mr Chung, now will you please,
Not come climbing o'er our wall;
Breaking down our mulberry trees;—
Not that I care much for these,
I fear my brothers to displease;
Chung is dear too, in a way—
But what would my brothers say?
That's what I've to fear."

Here is love acknowledged and boasted of—

"In the carrage I ride,
A young wife at my side,
With a face like the hedge-rose fair,
And we ramble at will,
And mine eyes roam still,
To the gems at her girdle there.
O handsome is she, the eldest Kiang,—
Handsome truly, and debonair.

"And when walking I go,
She is with me, and so
Like the hedge-rose blooms her face;
And in rambling around,
I can hear the sound,
Of the gems that her girdle grace.
O handsome is she, the eldest Kiang,—
Her fame shall no time efface."

Married love in this "Book of Odes" generally expresses itself in plaintive regrets for husbands who are away enduring the hardships of warlike expeditions; and occasionally, to do them justice, in the regrets of the

husbands as they keep the night watches in camp, and think of their wives at home. Again we notice that the scenery and images are all drawn from country, not from city life.

Historical allusions are not wanting in the "Odes," but for history we must turn to the "Shu King," or "Book of Documents."

It consists of fifty-eight books or documents belonging to different periods, and arranged in the chronological order of the dynasties to which they refer. It begins with the doings of the legendary Emperor Yao, whose reign is placed by the current chronology at some two thousand three hundred and fifty years before the Christian era. It deals successively with the deeds of his successors Shun and the great Yü, and on through two prehistoric dynasties till it brings us to the rise of the dynasty of Chow. In these early records there is an entire lack of fixed dates, and it is only in the later books of the "Shu King," entitled the "Books of Chow," that we find ourselves on continuously historical ground with a definite and trustworthy chronology.

This portion of the work begins with the grand starting-point of Chinese history. King Show, the last ruler of the Shang dynasty, was a tyrant of the vilest type. He built vast palaces, and surrounded them with pleasure grounds in which were gathered great collections of birds and beasts. A lake of wine surrounded by trees, from the boughs of which cooked meats were hung, was the scene of the most outrageous orgies. At length the Duke of Chow put himself at the head of the people and nobles of the states, crossed the Yellow River in force, announced in the "Great Speech," which is one of the most striking passages in the "Shoo King," that the iniquity of the King of Shang was full, and summoned them to follow him to execute the vengeance of Heaven.

"God," he said, "will no longer indulge him, but with a curse is sending on him this ruin. I, who am but a little child, presume reverently to comply with the will of God, to make an end of his disorderly ways."

With the overthrow and death of King Show and the succession to the throne of his conqueror, the Prince of Chow, under the title of Wu Wang, the real history of China begins. This dynasty of Chow lasted for over eight hundred and sixty years, and its history is further illustrated by the "Ts'un-Ch'iu," or "Book of Annals," which is the only work we possess from the pen of Confucius himself.

We are at present concerned only with the literary aspects of these books, and a few words must suffice.

The "Shu King" is of interest as containing undoubtedly ancient documents, affording material for the study of the language in its earliest forms. The authorship of its various books is unknown, and the genuineness of some is more than doubtful. They suffered, as did also the "Book of Odes," in repeated disasters and commotions which disturbed the history of the Empire.

In the year 213 B.C. the Emperor of that day, founder of the dynasty which succeeded that of Chow, conceived the idea of abolishing all historic records previous to his own reign. He ordered the burning of all copies of the "Odes" and the "Documents," and followed up this decree by burying alive 460 scholars who had failed to render obedience. For eleven years the literature of ancient China was in abeyance; but the dynasty founded on these savage measures was happily short-lived, and that of Han which took its place, immediately took steps for the recovery of the lost treasures. Copies of some were found hidden, built up in the walls of houses, some were restored from the lips of those who could recite them, and the result is the text which we now possess of these ancient works.

This catastrophe and other vicissitudes of a like kind have given rise to a vast literature of textual criticism, in which are displayed enormous labour, acute analysis, and skilful exposition. The result of all these investigations seems to justify our looking upon these ancient texts as substantially genuine.

When we come to the "Book of Annals," written by Confucius himself, it is natural to suppose that we shall find in it the culmination of Chinese literature. It is the only work of which he was the author. It is of small bulk, and deals with matters of state with which he was familiar. Confucius himself speaks of it as the book by which posterity will know him.

But it is the least interesting of all the classical books. As a record of facts it is unimportant, and it is almost as devoid of literary quality as Bradshaw's Railway Guide. It consists of brief disjointed notes of events jotted down under their dates, without the least attempt to weave them into a continuous narrative, to estimate their importance, or to trace their development.

I have not yet touched on the religion of the ancient Chinese. It is principally represented, as I have said, by the "Li Ki" or "Record of Ritual," though some of its most fundamental ideas crop up frequently both in the "Odes" and the "Documents." But the "Record of Ritual" is of later date, belonging to the period subsequent to Confucius, and bears many traces of his influence. As its name indicates, it treats religion from the point of view of ceremonial. At the same time ceremonial is invariably judged on the ground of fitness to express natural and appropriate feeling. It is traced in the minutest detail through all parts of human life. It often reminds one of the utterance of a contemporary statesman about Confucius himself. "This Mr K'ung," he said, "has a thousand peculiarities. It would take generations to exhaust all that he knows about the cere-

monies of going up and going down." So in the "Record of Ritual," religion, if one may call it so, appears not as a spiritual force, not as a faith or creed, but as a minute and sometimes tedious directory of public and private worship and conduct. From the way in which children should get out of bed in the morning, and, after washing and dressing, should wait upon their parents with enquiries after their health, and other polite attentions, life is taken, stage by stage, from the cradle to the grave. The ceremony of "capping," in which a boy enters at the age of twenty on the dignity of manhood; the rites of marriage and their preliminaries; the paying of visits and the conduct of banquets; official etiquette and the relative duties of sovereigns and their ministers; are all duly laid down in this "Whole duty of man." But the subject that is treated at greatest length is the round of duties connected with death and burial, and the sacrifices to the spirits of the departed, in which we find the deepest expression of the practical religious ideas of the Chinese mind. The points I have mentioned will perhaps suggest to you that this book is rather one of etiquette than of religion. So indeed it would be, were it not that the etiquette of social life in all its aspects is made to circle round the controlling conceptions of ancestral worship.

Love and reverence for the departed are pictured as lying at the root of all the observances of this worship. Amidst the wearisome details of fit times and correct places, seemly caps and proper girdles, suitable offerings and appropriate attitudes, it is refreshing to meet occasionally a simple utterance of natural feeling; as when it is said of the typical filial son—"When his father died he could not bear to read his books; the touch of his hand seemed to be still on them. When his mother died he could not bear to drink from the cups and bowls that she had used; the breath of her mouth seemed to be still on them." A Chinese heart will sometimes vibrate to

the touch of a vanished hand as truly as our own, and one would fain fasten on such utterances as giving the key to ancestral worship. But Confucius is quoted in the "Record of Ritual" in one of his hesitating utterances, which expresses only too faithfully the average Chinese feeling towards the dead. It is said of him elsewhere, "He sacrificed to the dead as if they were present," but his words as quoted in the "Record of Ritual," show his real feeling. He is there reported as saying:—

"In dealing with the dead, if we treat them as if they were entirely dead, that would show a want of affection, and should not be done; or, if we treat them as if they were entirely alive, that would show a want of wisdom, and should not be done. On this account the vessels of bamboo are not fit for actual use; those of earthenware cannot be used to wash in; those of wood are incapable of being carved; the lutes are strung, but not evenly; the pandean pipes are complete, but not in tune; the bells and musical stones are there, but they have no stands. They are called vessels to the eye of fancy; that is, the dead are thus treated as if they were spiritual intelligences."

On this curious borderland between affirmation and denial with regard to spiritual beings Confucius took his stand, and the "Record of Ritual" is dominated by the same view. It has thus prepared the way for the ancestral worship of the present day, which is, I fear, in most cases substantially an effort to appease by offerings the spirits of the dead, regarded as ghosts of uncertain temper, very powerful, and very quick to resent any neglect on the part of the living.

Regarded as a religious treatise this "Record of Ritual" presents one most remarkable feature. In it the grandest religious conception of the older books, the "Book of Odes" and the "Book of Documents," the conception, that is, of the being and greatness of God, is conspicuously

lacking. In that contrast you have the crucial test of the influence of Confucius, the greatest of Chinamen—the one sagely teacher, as they style him, of ten thousand ages.

It curiously illustrates Western ignorance of Chinese literature that you find a learned writer mis-stating the whole question of Chinese religion in the words, "Without Confucius, China had been without a native religion."

If so large a subject could be fairly dealt with by way of epigram, it would be nearer the truth to say, "But for Confucius, China had been a religious country." Let me briefly explain.

In the earliest parts of the "Book of Documents" and the "Book of Odes" frequent mention is made of "Shang-ti," as the one great Spirit, supreme over men and things, Creator, Preserver, and Lord. The ancient kings are described as worshipping him with sacrifices and prayers. He is described as mighty in power, employing men as His servants, setting up and removing kings at His sovereign pleasure, dealing with men in majesty in ways past finding out, but always righteous, benevolent, and merciful.

When we read the language used of Shang-ti throughout these books we feel that, whatever be the source of these ideas, the Great Being who is so described is none other than the Living and True God. Nothing false or low or unworthy is attributed in these books to Him. No image has ever been made to represent His form.

It is this grand conception of God that is lacking in the "Record of Ritual," and this lack must be traced mainly, I fear, to the influence of Confucius. In the latter portions of the "Book of Documents" we see that the kings of Chow used instead of the title Shang-ti, the vastly inferior expression "Heaven and Earth," as descriptive of the Supreme Being. Confucius, with his shrinking from definite language in regard to spiritual

beings, confirmed this usage, and habitually spoke of "Heaven" rather than of God. It is true that he said on one occasion that the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth were the means by which men worshipped God.

But Confucius did much to undermine the realisation of the personality of God in the minds of his countrymen. With a keen interest in practical ethics, especially as applied to statecraft, he had no anxiety to give his ethics any theological basis. The result has been to leave his countrymen without any spiritual atmosphere, and so to vitiate in practice his ethical theories that it has been said without injustice, "The best answer to Confucianism is China."

Confucius holds a position of extraordinary authority both in the popular mind and in the view of native scholars. There are many profound and striking thoughts in his sayings as recorded by his followers. He was an earnest student of antiquity, and in its greatest men he recognised kindred souls. We sometimes wonder at the likeness to Confucius, in thought and mental attitude, of the generations of Chinese who have been reared in his teaching; but we seek in vain in his recorded life and words for the secret of his power to mould them. The truth is they are like him, not so much because he moulded them, as because he, like them, was moulded by the generations that went before him. He is for all time the typical Chinaman, but his greatness lies in his displaying the type on a grand scale, not in his creating it.

If my view of him seems grudging and ungenerous, I will support it by the verdict of Dr Legge, who was a laborious student of the ancient literature of China for fifty years. He sums up his estimate of Confucius in these words: "After long study of his character and opinions I am unable to regard him as a great man. He was not before his age, though he was above the

mass of the officers and scholars of his time. He threw no new light on any of the questions which have a world-wide interest. He gave no impulse to religion. He had no sympathy with progress. His influence has been wonderful, but it will henceforth wane."

I have spoken of Confucius in his relation to the two latest of the five classics. His sayings recorded by his disciples form the matter of the first of what are called the "Four Books." There are two smaller Confucian books, "The Great Learning," and "The Doctrine of the Mean," and these with the teachings of Mencius complete this set of "Four Books."

Confucius and Mencius were separated by the lapse of little over a century, but they seem to belong to different worlds. Confucius was the last of the ancients; Mencius was the first of the moderns. Mencius is styled by the Chinese "the secondary sage," but I confess he is to me more interesting, though perhaps not greater, than Confucius.

In the literary style of Mencius there is a rounded completeness, a grace and elegance, which are wanting in the abrupt, elliptical structure of the earlier writers. He has a lively imagination, a kindling eloquence, and a rare skill in illustration. His writings are studded with happy phrases, weighty in meaning, brief, elegant and clear cut. He commends himself to the modern spirit by the healthy independence of his views on the relations between sovereigns and their people, and the manly boldness with which he spoke out his mind to the unwilling kings who employed him as their counsellor. "The people," he said, "are of first importance; the sovereign is of the least."

I will quote one or two specimens of his style of teaching. He said, "I like fish, and I also like bears' paws." (Bears' paws being a rare delicacy.) "If I cannot have the two together, I will let the fish go and take the

bears' paws. So, I like life, and I also like righteousness. If I cannot keep the two together, I will let life go and choose righteousness."

Again, "The great man is he who does not lose his child's heart."

"Benevolence is man's peaceful abode; righteousness is his straight path. Alas! for those who leave the peaceful abode untenanted and the straight path untrod."

But the chief interest attaching to the name of Mencius is due to his initiating a great discussion upon man's moral nature. A glance at this discussion takes us out of the classics into one of the main lines of the more modern literature.

If you pass within three hundred yards of any Chinese school you are made aware of its existence by the extraordinary sounds that issue from it. Curious to trace these to their source, you enter the small schoolroom, and a singular sight presents itself. Fifteen or twenty boys are sitting at little tables, each swaying to and fro on his stool to the limit of safety, his head thrown back to the horizontal, and with all his energy projecting vertically upwards the wild medley of sounds that had caught your ear. It is not that the boys have been seized with sudden madness, nor is it a rebellion against their teacher. It is only their usual quiet way of getting up their lessons by oral recitation. If you pick up one of their books you will find in nine cases out of ten that they are shouting passages from a little book whose first sentences are—

> "Men at birth, Are by nature good;
> By nature alike, They differ through training."

—a doctrine of which in both its parts these declaimers themselves are a daily refutation.

This doctrine—"Men at birth are by nature good"—if not first promulgated by Mencius, owes to him its popularity and its recognition as the orthodox view of

human nature. It was disputed in his lifetime by Kau Tsze, who maintained that human nature was neither good nor bad but indifferent. Kau Tsze said: "Man's nature is like water whirling round. Open a passage for it on the east, and it will flow to the east; open a passage for it on the west, and it will flow to the west. Man's nature is indifferent to good and evil, just as water is indifferent to east and west."

To which Mencius, with his happy art of illustration, replied: "Water indeed will flow indifferently east or west, but will it flow indifferently up or down? The goodness of man's nature is like water's flowing downward. . . . As for water, by striking it, and making it leap up, you may force it over your forehead; by confining and leading it you may force it uphill, but is this the nature of water? It is done by forcing it. So man's liability to do evil arises from his nature being dealt with in this way."

The views of Mencius are still more strongly opposed by Seun K'ing, who begins his treatise by asserting broadly "Man's nature is evil; the good is artificial." He founds chiefly on the fact that the practice of virtue requires effort, and declares that benevolence and righteousness are as much artificial products, *i.e.* are as unnatural, as is the vessel made from the potter's clay.

The next great name in this discussion is that of Han Yü, a brilliant scholar, statesman, letter-writer, essayist and poet of the ninth century of our era. He was a minister of the Emperor Hien Tsung, when the latter in 819 A.D. arranged to receive with great honours as a relic of Buddha a piece of bone which was brought to his capital. Against this proceeding Han Yü protested in a spirited memorial which is still extant, under the title of "Memorial on the Bone." He set forth to the Emperor the long and glorious reigns of his ancestors, and the peace of the people in the great ages before Buddhism had

been thought of, and enlarged on the folly of going out to receive with royal honours an old rotten bone of a man who, if he had come to China in his lifetime, would have been received only as a suppliant from a barbarous land. This was much too plain speaking for the Imperial devotee, and Han Yü was sentenced to death. On the remonstrance of his fellow-ministers this sentence was commuted, and he was banished under the guise of an appointment to the post of governor of what was then the barbarous region near Swatow. Here he taught the barbarous people, and is still remembered as their greatest benefactor. His expulsion of the demon of ignorance is symbolised in a legend of his expulsion from the rivers of a huge crocodile. The remonstrance which he addressed to it, which is to be found among his works, is a curious combination of solemnity and humour. He is worshipped now in a temple erected to his honour as at once the Cadmus and the St Patrick of South China.

Han Yü took up in turn the controversy about human nature, with a minuter analysis than the early philosophers. In his "Essay on Human Nature" he sets forth that "there are three grades of the nature—the superior, the middle and the inferior. The superior grade is good, and good only; the middle grade is capable of being led; it may rise to the superior, or sink to the inferior; the inferior is evil, and evil only." He condemns his predecessors as having had in their view only the middle grade. As applied to it their differing views were all alike right, but all were wrong in neglecting to recognise the superior and the inferior grades, the absolutely good and the absolutely bad.

He supports his views by references to the well-known names of antiquity—the bad, bad from their birth, the good, good from their birth: some growing up under the best of training, yet turning out villains; others taught nothing but evil, yet growing up to be sages.

Han Yü no doubt did service in showing the complexity of the problem, but his own view is too empirical, and so to speak opportunist, to offer a real solution. Its parts are too obviously framed to meet the difficulties of the arguments employed by others ; they are not dictated by the inner recognition of necessary truth.

Still later, the discussion is taken up by Chu Tsze, the most famous of all Chinese scholars since classical times. He flourished in the twelfth century, and has powerfully influenced all later Chinese thought.

Ostensibly he agrees with Mencius as to the moral nature of man, affirming that it is entirely good. But this heaven-given nature consists of the abstractions, benevolence, justice, propriety, and wisdom, and is therefore itself a non-material abstraction. In order to realise itself this immaterial nature unites with a material essence, and this introduces an element of evil which resists and thwarts the manifestations of the good nature. Finally, another essential nature emerges, which subsists in the union of the material and the immaterial natures, and depends in its own character upon the predominance of the one or the other. It is the function of education to enable this indeterminate nature to overcome the material and assimilate the immaterial. When this is done you have a good man in actual life.

Probably you feel that I have given you too much of this age-long controversy. I purposely make no comparison of its results with those of Western philosophy, and avoid describing it in the technical language of European thought. Tedious as it is, it is full of interest as showing that the antinomies of human life and character have, in China as elsewhere, pressed heavily on all earnest thinkers. They too have recognised, if they have not groaned under, the law of the members warring against the law of the mind.

To Christian missionaries to China it is of profound

significance that we address ourselves to a people whose popular thought is penetrated by a consciousness on the one hand of the high destiny of man, and the essential dignity of his moral nature ; and by a conviction on the other, that in the practical art of living there is a wide divergence from the standard of the ideal.

Vast regions of Chinese literature I must pass over without even naming them. But there is one school of thought which I cannot wholly omit—the school of the Taoists, the Hegelians of China, whose system forms the third, with so-called Confucianism and Buddhism, of the religions of China.

The founder of Taoism was Lau Tsze, who was born about 604 B.C., and thus contemporary with Confucius, but senior to him by fifty years. The two philosophers had one interview from which Confucius seems to have come off dazzled and perplexed. Lau Tsze did not approve of him, and said so, and Confucius on his part could not understand the flights of Lau Tsze.

It is a noticeable feature of Chinese thought, so far as we have now glanced at it, that it is wholly lacking in the region of metaphysics. Practical ethics based upon example and the instincts of the best men, with some analysis of results such as we have seen in the long controversy about human nature, sufficed for the philosophy of the Confucian school.

The field of metaphysics, neglected by others, was earnestly cultivated by Lau Tsze and his followers of the Taoist school. Their favourite word "Tao" means "reason" or "principle," but as used by them has a deeper meaning which is not easily grasped. Lau Tsze left behind him a single work, the "Tao Teh King," a title which I am tempted to translate, "A Treatise on the Absolute and the Actual." It is a book of no great bulk, but of profound interest. It is written, unfortunately, in an extremely obscure style, and is characterised by great

brevity of expression, and the use of common words in unusual ways. It thus presents great difficulties to the student. The question has been raised whether this classic is indeed the work of Lao Tsze, but there seems to be no sufficient reason to doubt the authenticity of it. Lao Tsze might be described as a pre-historic Hegelian, and unlike Confucius, his chief interest seems to have lain in the metaphysical basis of his thinking. The characteristic word of his great treatise is the word "Tao," which has been used in later times to describe the system of Taoism. The word "Tao" has also been used in the translations of the Christian Scriptures to represent the word "λόγος," in the Gospel of St John. As used by Lao Tsze, the word "tao," which originally means "a road," seems sometimes to mean "the right way," or "the path"; sometimes "the principle of things," or "right reason"; sometimes "the course of nature"; while sometimes it seems almost undistinguishable from the idea of God.

I will read a passage to illustrate his use of this term. "There was something undefined and complete, coming into existence before Heaven and Earth. How still it was and formless, standing alone and undergoing no change, reaching everywhere and in no danger! It may be regarded as the Mother of all things.

"I do not know its name, and I give it the designation of the Tao. Making an effort to give it a name, I call it The Great. . . .

"Man takes his law from the Earth; the Earth takes its law from Heaven; Heaven takes its law from the Tao. The law of the Tao is its being what it is."

So in an earlier passage he says the Tao is the Originator of Heaven and Earth, and again, "I do not know whose son it is. It might appear to have been before God."

Commenting on these passages Dr Legge has asked,

"Was he groping after God, if haply he might find Him?" and answers the question by saying, "I think he was, and he gets so far as to conceive of Him as 'the Uncaused Cause,' but comes short of the idea of His personality." It is not necessary to dispute this judgment of charity, but there was already in China, long before Lao Tsze, some knowledge of God, and one searches in vain for any adequate recognition of it in his writings. He seems to have directed his thinking more to the abstract conditions of Being as a philosophical problem, and to the harmonious adjustment of the individual life with these conditions. Apparently he felt no necessity for considering man's relation with a personal God. Any satisfaction which Taoism may have to offer to the religious sense must be looked for in other departments of the Taoist School. It is not to be found in the writings of Lao Tsze and his immediate followers.

Some further idea of Lao Tsze's thinking may be got from such passages as the following:—"We look at it, and we do not see it, and we name it 'the Equable.' We listen to it, and we do not hear it, and we name it 'the Inaudible.' We try to grasp it, and do not get hold of it, and we name it 'the Subtle.' . . . Ceaseless in its action, it yet cannot be named, and then again it returns and becomes nothing. This is called the Form of the Formless, and the Semblance of the Invisible; this is called the Fleeting and Indeterminable." This is another of the attempts of Lao Tsze to adumbrate his idea of the "Tao." It is not "Reason," nor "Pure Being," but seems to be more nearly than anything else the "Becoming" of Hegel. Add to his descriptions of "Tao," Lao Tsze's doctrines that "Wu wei," that is, "doing nothing," is the secret of being irresistible, and that non-existence is the only stable form of Being, and you have some of the elements of Hegel's philosophy anticipated in China by twenty-four centuries. "It is the

way of Heaven," he says, "not to strive, and yet it skilfully overcomes; not to speak, and yet it is skilful in obtaining a reply; does not call, and yet men come to it of themselves. Its demonstrations are quiet, and yet its plans are skilful and effective. The meshes of the net of Heaven are large; far apart, but letting nothing escape." Again, "The soft overcomes the hard, and the weak the strong. . . . The Tao in its regular course does nothing, and so there is nothing which it does not do."

The value of non-existence he illustrates thus:—"The thirty spokes unite in the one nave; but it is on the empty space (for the axle) that the use of the wheel depends. Clay is fashioned into vessels; but it is on their empty hollowness that their use depends. The door and windows are cut out to form an apartment; but it is on the empty space within that its use depends."

The most brilliant follower of Lao Tsze was Chwang Tsze, of the fourth century before the Christian era. From the name of his birth-place his great work is entitled "The true Book of Nan-hwa." He justly says of himself, "Of my sentences nine out of ten are metaphorical." Profoundly metaphysical, he relieves his discussions by bright apologues, vivid word pictures, and ingenious and subtle illustrations, while through the whole runs a vein of delicate satire and genial humour. Some of his strokes are at his own expense, and not a few are aimed at Confucius and his school. There was an early opposition between the Taoist and Confucian schools. Their whole motives, interests, and temperament, were distinct. One is tempted to speculate how different might have been the whole course of Chinese thought if Lao Tsze and Chwang Tsze had gained in a larger degree the ear of their fellow-countrymen. Their leading idea seems to have been the vanity of human effort. Instead of seeking a sphere of action, as Confucius and his followers did, in the service of kings, and as ministers of

state, they rather affected the hermit life, and withdrew from worldly affairs. They did this, not merely to secure leisure for study and the contemplative life, but as putting themselves into the right relation to the system of nature, in which, according to them, everything that is truly great is done without exertion and without noise. Chwang Tsze echoes his master's teaching in his remark, "Heaven does nothing, and thence comes its serenity; Earth does nothing, and thence comes its rest. By the union of these two inactivities all things are produced. How vast and imperceptible is the process!—they seem to come from nowhere! How imperceptible and vast!—there is no visible image of it. All things in their variety grow from this inaction. Hence it is said, 'Heaven and Earth do nothing, and yet there is nothing that they do not do.' But what man is there that can attain to this inaction?"

Again, on similar grounds, but with perhaps a less noble application of his principle, he devotes a whole book of his treatise to illustrating the advantage of being of no use, and ends it thus, "The cinnamon tree can be eaten, and therefore it is cut down. The varnish tree is useful, and therefore incisions are made in it. All men know the advantage of being useful, but no one knows the advantage of being useless."

From this point of view Chwang Tsze frequently criticises, with no little severity, what he regarded as the restless fussiness of Confucius, and the two schools have from the beginning gone their several ways, with but little regard for each other.

Looking at their controversy from an independent point of view, one may say that the sober practical spirit of Confucius might have imposed wholesome restraints upon the flights of the Taoists, and on the other hand the speculative daring and the deeper questionings of the Taoist philosophers would have greatly enriched and

deepened the too restrained and cold didactic teaching of Confucius. The speculative vein of Chwang Tsze may be judged from this dilemma: "I dreamt that I, Chwang Tsze, was a butterfly flying about enjoying itself. I did not know that it was Chwang Tsze. Suddenly I awoke, and was myself again, the veritable Chwang Tsze. I did not know whether it had formerly been Chwang Tsze dreaming that he was a butterfly, or it was now a butterfly dreaming that it was Chwang Tsze."

He introduces an old fisherman having an interview, probably imaginary, with Confucius. The sage was singing in a forest, accompanying himself on the lute, while his disciples were sitting round him reading. The fisherman got out of his boat and came towards them. "His beard and eyebrows were turning white; his hair was all uncombed; and his sleeves hung idly down." Pointing to Confucius he asked who he was, and what his occupation; to which the answer is, "He manifests benevolence and righteousness; he cultivates the ornaments of ceremonies and music; he pays special attention to the relationships of society."

This definition of the functions of Confucius leads the old man to ask whether he were a ruler or assistant to a ruler. Learning that he was not, the old man withdrew, laughing and muttering, "Benevolence is benevolence . . . but alas! how far is he from the proper way of life." Confucius followed him anxious for explanations, and an amusing colloquy ensues, in which the sage has to listen respectfully to some very plain speaking, the old fisherman charging him with meddling with other people's affairs, and with loquacity, ambition, and conceit, summing up with this parable: "There was a man who was frightened at his shadow and disliked to see his footprints, so that he ran to escape from them. But the more frequently he lifted his feet, the more numerous his footprints were; and however fast he ran, his shadow did not

leave him. He thought he was going too slow, and ran on with all his speed without stopping, till his strength was exhausted and he died. He did not know that if he had stayed in a shady place his shadow would have disappeared, and that if he had remained still he would have lost his footprints. His stupidity was excessive!" Turning upon Confucius with "And you, sir!" the old fisherman presses home the moral, which obviously is to disparage the somewhat fussy activity of Confucius as a public teacher, and to recommend to him the practice of Tao, inactivity or *laissez-faire*, as the way at once of peace and of real influence.

An enthusiastic native commentator says of Chwang Tsze's style: "There are so many changes and transformations, so many pauses and rests as in music, conflicting discussions and subtle disquisitions, the pencil's point now hidden in smoke and now among the clouds, that no one who has not made himself familiar with a myriad volumes should presume to look and pronounce on this book. The features come and go on the paragraphs like the clouds in the open firmament, changing every moment and delightful to behold."

It was characteristic of the whole attitude of Chwang Tsze that he attached no importance to the rites of burial which were to Confucius all important. We read: "When Chwang Tsze was about to die his disciples signified their wish to give him a grand burial." "I shall have heaven and earth," said he, "for my coffin and its shell; the sun and moon for my two round symbols of precious stone, the stars and constellations for my pearls and jewels; and all things assisting as the mourners. Will not the provisions for my burial be complete? What could you add to them?"

In some of his utterances there seems to be a real, though dim and uncertain, feeling after God, and outlook towards the future life; as when he says, "The ancients

described death as the loosening of the cord on which God suspended the life. What we can point to are the faggots that have been consumed; but the fire is transmitted elsewhere, and we know not that it is over and ended."

I have not referred to the Buddhist literature. It is very extensive, but represents a strain of thought that is not purely native. An interesting branch of it consists of travels of Buddhist pilgrims who made their way from China to India overland to visit for themselves the holy places of Buddhism. Their popular books consist of litanies which are often mere transliterations from Sanscrit or Pali originals, meaningless to Chinese readers; tales of the Buddhist gods, and exhortations to virtuous living on Buddhist methods. Into this field I cannot enter.

I have been dealing chiefly with the graver productions of philosophers and historians. But light literature and fiction abound.

There are two main types of the Chinese novel. In one a youth of rare literary gifts falls deep in love with a young lady of equal attainments and of matchless beauty. They correspond by original verses dropped into the river or thrown over the garden wall. The verses of the one are capped by the other. The young student takes his degree, and all seems going bravely when harsh fate intervenes and separates the lovers. After endless adventures and unheard of sorrows, through all which the pair remain faithful, the hour of fate arrives. The student, now become a mandarin, recognises his beloved in one of the parties in a suit that is tried before him. He rescues her from her enemies, bestows official rank upon her father, marries her, and under the special favour of the Emperor, they live happy ever after.

The other type is the historical novel. Perhaps on the whole the best sample of it is the romance called "The Three Kingdoms." Founded though it is upon authentic

history, and recording the doings of historical personages, it is yet sufficiently embellished to rank as a work of fiction.

The scene is laid among the rival states of the third century of our era. The "Three Kingdoms," from which the work takes its name, were Shuh, Wei, and Wu. The great Han dynasty, which I have mentioned already as succeeding the epoch of the burning of the books in 200 B.C., had now come to its end, after four hundred years of glory so great that the Chinese still love to style themselves "Men of Han."

Liu Pei, Chief of Shuh, was the legitimate successor of the house of Han, but was opposed by his rivals, Tshau Tshau of Wei, with his green eyes and red hair, and Sun Khuan of Wu. Liu Pei, with ears drooping to his shoulders, arms reaching, like Rob Roy's, to his knees, and eyes that could look backwards, is the hero of the tale, which culminates, but does not end, by placing him on the Imperial throne.

There are said to be seven hundred characters in the work, and sometimes one is at a loss to say which of them has become for the time the hero. Certainly one of the most conspicuous and interesting figures in the drama, as one might call it, is the famous councillor, Tsu-ko Liang, whom Liu Pei calls to his assistance. Tsu-ko Liang is a typical Chinese scholar, not a bookworm but a man of affairs, and supposed to be always provided with a *plan* ready for production on every emergency, whether of peace or war.

He had been living retired on a mountain peak in a hut of reeds when Liu Pei, hearing of his wisdom, sought him out and begged him to become his counsellor. It was by the subtilty and address of Tsu-ko Liang that Liu Pei at length reached the throne.

One of the most striking scenes of the book is when Tsu-ko Liang is sent to the Court of Wu to induce Sun

Khuan to join Liu Pei in taking up arms against Tshau Tshau. There follows what is called a war of the tongue in which the envoy, so handsome and elegant with his grand and haughty figure, more than holds his own against over twenty of the civil and military counsellors of Wu, sitting in state with their high caps, broad girdles, and elegant robes. Their attack is bitter, but clumsy, and the champion silences them one by one by subtle argument, rapid retort, and apt historical allusion. Tsu-ko Liang carries his point, and the councillors consent to appeal to arms. A great battle follows, which leads on to the issue of the drama. The whole is worked out with skill and vigour, and forms to the foreign reader a revelation of Chinese character.

Now, what is the impression left upon your minds by the rapid survey we have taken of a few samples of Chinese literature?

Firstly, I fear, of weariness.

That feeling is itself instructive. The Chinese people oppress us by the sheer weight of their numbers and the vast extent of their country. The problems, political, social, and religious, which they present to us, are on an enormous scale. Both in political life and in the mission of the Christian Church, Chinese questions require us to brace ourselves to deal with them with broad outlook and unwearying patience, and with resolute firmness of grasp.

The people who have made the literature of China, and whom the literature in its turn sets before us, are not a race whom we can afford to ignore or to despise.

Their literature shows them endowed with all the gifts that make a great people. It presents immense variety and great breadth of interest. There is in it a strong sense of reality and grasp of things as they actually are. There is in the better parts of the literature great purity of moral tone. The Chinese are not a moral people, and a work entitled "A Collection of Family Treasures"

gives, along with many useful chapters on education, on agricultural pursuits and household work, one melancholy section entitled "A Good Laugh," which consists entirely of vile stories. But the established standard of moral judgment condemns such things. The stories of the gods are not, as in India, records of vice, and vice has never in China, as in India, been made a branch of religion. In preaching the ethics of Christianity we have the conscience of the people and the judgment of their great writers on our side.

The historical portions of the literature, and their writers on law and jurisprudence, prove the capacity of the Chinese mind for self-government, and for the maintenance and development of their national greatness; while its philosophical and artistic portions show them well fitted to bear their part in the intellectual life of the world.

In China we are not dealing with a weak race who decay at the touch of the foreigner. They are a strong people—a people whom we can respect, and whom, when the Spirit of Christ has touched them *and us*, we can even learn to love.

LECTURE III

THE RELIGIONS OF CHINA

Part I.—Confucianism

THE religious problem in China is one of no little complexity. It differs in details in different parts of the country, but in its main features is alike throughout the Empire. It may be studied in either of two ways. First, we may trace its history and theoretical aspects in their literature ; secondly, we may study the practical religion of the people as it is seen in daily life. These two views of Chinese religion will lead us to very different results. Those who study the problem in books only, are apt to read into the religious books of China many ideas which are really drawn from Christian sources. On the other hand, if we confine ourselves to the practical working of religion amongst the people, we shall be apt to fall into the opposite error of attributing to them only complicated superstitions not capable of any rational explanation. Speaking broadly, the Chinese cannot be called a naturally religious people. Their natural temperament is strong on the practical side, but they have little interest in what is merely theoretical, and are not readily moved by sentiment. Their philosophy and their religion alike have concerned themselves more with the application of principles to character and daily life, and the great classical books of China can scarcely be regarded as treating of religion at all. This feature of the Chinese temperament has been well described by Père Callery, a Romish missionary, in commenting on one of the classical books.

He says: "The 'Record of Rites,' that of all the classics in which religious questions ought naturally to have been treated, in regard to the sacrifices to Heaven, to the tutelary gods, and to the ancestors, glides lightly over everything that is purely speculative, and only mentions these weighty matters with extreme indifference. In my view this proves two things: first, that in ancient times the greatest geniuses of China have only possessed obscure, uncertain, and often contradictory notions in regard to the Creator and to the nature and destinies of the soul; second, that the Chinese possess in a very feeble degree the religious sentiment, and that they do not experience, like the races of the West, the imperious need of sounding the mysteries of the invisible world." In these respects the Chinese differ widely from the Hindoos. The latter are passionately fond of metaphysical abstractions and speculations, and are readily and strongly moved by sentiment. In visiting India I was greatly struck by the apparent difference between the Hindoos and the Chinese in the outward performance of their worship. The Hindoo worshipper seems, at least, to be deeply absorbed in the ceremony or prayers with which he is occupied. The Chinese, on the other hand, generally seems to be going through his worship in a perfunctory manner as a thing which is necessary to be done, but which is done without much absorption of mind; and if he finds himself watched during his religious observances he assumes an apologetic air, as one who has been detected in doing something of which he is rather ashamed. In passing along the Ganges in front of the ghats of Benares, one saw hundreds of men and women bathing in the sacred waters of the river, or sprinkling it upon their heads, folding their hands and reciting prayers with an air of devotion which seemed to express some real religious feeling. Such a scene is rarely, if ever, seen in China. The Chinese worshipper is usually indifferent to inter-

ruption, and gives the impression that he is little concerned in his religious observances. I have visited many Chinese temples, and observed the conduct and manner of the worshippers, but only once have I seen the worshippers absorbed in their devotions. That was in a large temple of special renown which drew worshippers from great distances. Entering it early one morning I found rows of worshippers kneeling within the temple, and filling it from the front of the innermost altar out to the outer doors. Many of them had brought offerings which were deposited on the ground beside them, and all seemed to be so absorbed that they took no notice of my presence; but this was entirely unusual. It is a much more common experience on entering a temple to become at once the centre of interest both for priests and worshippers. Social worship is almost unknown, and the worshippers come in either singly or in small family groups. If a foreigner enters they often turn aside from their devotions to enter into conversation, and it not infrequently happens that in answer to their questions one is led to talk to them of Christian truth, and perhaps even to preach to a considerable audience in the temple itself, and in the very presence of the idols. Such a thing would be almost impossible in India. In Benares, where I went to see some of the principal temples, we could only look in from the outer door, and were not suffered to set foot inside.

If there is little enthusiasm in Chinese worship, there is equally little fanaticism or bigotry. The alleged hostility of the Chinese to Christian missionaries is not directed against them as teachers of a strange religion, but rather as foreigners. There is undoubtedly a strong race prejudice against all foreigners, which is often stirred up for evil purposes by the literary caste and by the officials, but there is little fanatical hostility in the minds of the people to the preaching of a new religion.

One reason for this is that to the Chinese mind the profession of a new religion would not necessarily imply the rejection of the old. They have been accustomed for centuries to the mingling of several religions, which have accommodated themselves to each other so closely that it is hardly possible for the foreign student to separate the elements of which Chinese religious life is composed, and to trace each to the religion to which it properly belongs.

Speaking generally, there are three great religions in China—the Confucian, the Buddhist, and the Taoist. But the people are not to be thought of as divided into three sects professing these several religions. Every one practises all three on different occasions and for different purposes.

Every city, town, and village has its numerous temples, large and small, and these are to be found even in the country districts, by the roadsides, or among the fields, and sometimes in secluded spots where it seems as if no one could ever come to worship. The temples in the cities consist sometimes of great halls, with gilded images fifteen or twenty feet in height, with a large staff of attendant priests. In the country the temple is often but a little cottage from ten to twenty feet square, with two or three dusty and neglected images, a foot or eighteen inches in height, and no one in attendance. Besides these, shrines and images are to be found everywhere, in the streets, by the road-sides, in the fields, and in the homes of the people. The images in any household may often be found to represent all three of the popular religions, though when this is the case it is not the result of design.

Thus the question which is often put, "How many of the Chinese are Buddhists, how many are Taoists, and how many are Confucianists?" is really one which it is impossible to answer. The nearest answer that can be given is to say that all are Confucianists, all are Taoists, and all are Buddhists. They have recourse to these

different religions in connection with different aspects of life, and some persons may lean more to the observances of one system than to those of another, but every Chinese at some times or occasions, if not in his daily worship, has recourse to all.

Each of these religions recognises as its head and supreme authority an ancient sage, but their relations to the religions professed by their followers are not the same. Gautama, who became the Buddha, is the only one of them who really founded the system now associated with his name. Confucianism existed long before Confucius, while the superstitions of the Taoist religion have no real claim to connect themselves with the name of Lao Tsze, the great teacher of the philosophic doctrine of the Tao.

Confucius was born in 551 B.C., and died in 479 B.C., but Confucianism, as a system of religion and ethics, had been in existence for a thousand years before his birth. He was not its founder, but a follower and transmitter of it. He helped to impress it upon the minds of his countrymen, but it cannot even be said that he raised it to a higher level in regard to the real value of its religious conceptions.

Buddhism took its rise in Northern India, being founded there by Gautama, the Buddha. The date of his birth is uncertain, but may be placed about 620 B.C., and he is said to have died about 543 B.C. The religion which is known by his name was introduced to China about the time of the Christian era.

The nominal founder of Taoism was Lao Tsze, who was born about the year 604 B.C. He was more a philosopher than a religious teacher, and can in no sense be held responsible for the system which recognises him as its head.

It will be necessary to look at these three religions as they appear in books and in the lives of the people,

not attempting a critical analysis of them, but only indicating slightly those aspects of them which must determine our methods of presenting to their followers the truths of the Gospel.

1. *Confucianism.*—Confucianism may be regarded from two points of view. It is on one side a religion with a strict and somewhat elaborate ritual, and on the other, it is a philosophy or a system of ethics, especially as applied to state-craft, with hardly any religious element at all. In its religious aspect Confucianism may be traced to a very early date. In the earliest authentic Chinese records, "The Book of Odes" and the "Book of Documents," we find many notices which show that the early Chinese had theistic ideas and religious conceptions of no mean order. The old word "Ti," which was the early Chinese name for God, has been greatly abused in later times by its promiscuous application to many of their idols. But in the oldest books it is used, sometimes alone, sometimes with the addition of the epithet "Shang" or "Supreme," to describe the highest idea which the Chinese people have ever formed of God. Hence "Shang-ti" has been used by a majority of the missionaries and the Chinese Christians as the name of the true God, although this usage has always been objected to by some. Shang-ti is spoken of in the "Book of Odes" and "Book of Documents" as a great spirit, supreme ruler, maker of heaven and earth, who raises up and puts down sovereigns at His own will, who is inflexibly righteous in all His dealings, has a watchful regard of human affairs, and is the special protector of the poor and oppressed against violence and wrong. There is perhaps nothing said in these ancient books of "Shang-ti" which might not worthily be said of the one true God. In China, at least, the conception of God has not risen gradually from lower to higher levels. We find it in the earliest ages already at its highest development, and whatever changes have been introduced

later into the Chinese conceptions of God have been of the nature of a degradation rather than a development of the idea. The mere existence of this high idea in the books which are most esteemed among the Chinese is of enormous value to us as teachers of Christian truth. We can appeal from all the confused superstitions of modern idolatry to a time when these things were unknown to their forefathers, and when they worshipped alone one Supreme Spirit. This appeal is always listened to with respect, even by the least educated Chinese audience.

The appeal is still further strengthened by the continuance to the present day of a worship of Shang-ti which is of great significance and interest. To make the position of this worship in the religious system clear I should premise that through all the superstitions which have degraded religion in China there remains clear to the Chinese mind the conception that "Shang-ti" or God is the Supreme Spirit, infinitely great, and far above all the deities and spirits of the popular worship. But, strange as it may seem, this fact has never drawn the popular mind towards the worship of Shang-ti. On the contrary, their feeling is that Shang-ti is too great to be worshipped by common men, and his worship is confined to the Emperor alone. This view is sometimes justified by the plea that as the common people have no direct access to the Emperor, but must make known their wants to him through the local magistrates, so common men must approach the Supreme Spirit through the mediation of the inferior deities and idols.

In the worship of Shang-ti the Emperor acts as high-priest for his people. Twice a year he prepares himself for special acts of State worship, which are performed at the capital with great solemnity and minute care. He leaves his palace and enters a temple where he fasts, and prepares himself for the solemn ceremony. Next day, accompanied by the highest officials of the Empire, he goes out to what

is called the "Temple of Heaven," although the essential part of it is not a temple at all. It consists principally of a great mound or small artificial hill—a "high place"—forming three terraces rising one above another, each terrace approached by a flight of marble stairs, and surrounded by marble railings. At the top, on the highest part of the hill, is placed a table supporting a small wooden tablet, which bears the inscription in four Chinese characters—"Supreme God of the Sovereign Heavens." Before this tablet the Emperor—who until very recent years has expected all earthly ambassadors and even sovereigns to prostrate themselves before him—prostrates himself, and prays according to a carefully prepared ritual, in language which we might adopt in its entirety in prayer to the true God. At the same time offerings are made of precious stones and bales of silk, with burnt sacrifices of slain beasts. The following is a specimen of the language actually used in some of these Imperial prayers :—

"To Thee, O mysteriously working Maker, I look up in thought. . . . I thy servant am but a reed or a willow; my heart is but as that of an ant; yet I have received Thy favouring decree, appointing me to the government of the Empire. I deeply cherish a sense of my ignorance and blindness, and am afraid lest I prove unworthy of Thy great favours. Therefore will I reverently observe all the rules and statutes, striving, insignificant as I am, to discharge my loyal duty. Far distant here I look up to Thy heavenly palace. Come in Thy precious chariot to the altar. Thy servant, I bow my head to the earth, reverently expecting thine abundant grace. All my officers are here arranged along with me, joyfully worshipping before Thee. All the spirits accompany Thee as guards, (filling the air) from the east to the west. Thy servant, I prostrate myself to meet Thee, and reverently look up for Thy coming, O God. O that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to accept our offerings,

and regard us, while thus we worship Thee, whose goodness is inexhaustible!"

The form of prayer now quoted was in use till the year 1539 A.D., when a verbal change was introduced into the form of invocation. On the adoption of this change the following prayers, among others, were used:—

"Thou hast vouchsafed, O God, to hear us, for Thou as our Father dost regard us. I, Thy child, dull and unenlightened, am unable to show forth my feelings. . . . Honourable is Thy great name. With reverence we spread out these precious stones and silk, and as swallows rejoicing in the Spring, praise Thine abundant love. . . . The great and lofty One sends down His favour and regard, which we, in our insignificance, are hardly sufficient to receive. I, His simple servant, while I worship, present this precious cup to Him Whose years have no end. . . . Men and creatures are emparadised, O God, in Thy love. All living things are indebted to Thy goodness, but who knows whence his blessings come to him? It is Thou alone, O Lord, Who art the true parent of all things. The service is completed, but our poor sincerity cannot be fully expressed. Thy sovereign goodness is infinite. As a potter hast Thou made all living things. Great and small are curtained round by Thee. As engraven on the heart of Thy poor servant is the sense of Thy goodness, but my feeling cannot be fully displayed. With great kindness dost Thou bear with us, and notwithstanding our demerits dost grant us life and prosperity. . . . Spirits and men rejoice together, praising God the Lord. What limit, what measure can there be, while we celebrate His great name? For ever He setteth fast the high heavens, and shapeth the solid earth. His government is everlasting. His poor servant, I bow my head and lay it in the dust, bathed in His grace and glory. We have worshipped and written the great Name on this gem-like sheet. Now we display it before God,

and place it in the fire. These valuable offerings of silks and fine meats we burn also, with these sincere prayers, that they may ascend in volumes of flame up to the distant azure. All the ends of the earth look up to Him. All human beings, all things on the earth, rejoice together in the great Name."

When one reads utterances such as these, as representing a conception of God which has remained enshrined in the highest act of Chinese worship from the beginning of their history until now, one feels with double keenness the deep degradation of the popular idolatry. The Chinese have had, and have never wholly lost, a wonderfully high and true idea of God, but they have not allowed it to dominate their popular religion. They have confined it to the narrow sphere of a ceremony of state. It remains rather as a testimony against them than as a source of spiritual stimulus or religious life.

The act of worship which I have now described represents the Confucian religion at its best, and one would fain quit the subject at this point, but to do so would be to give an entirely false impression of Confucianism as a whole. It is not unjust to say that idolatry is a comparatively modern development of Chinese religious life. At the same time its roots are to be found even in the old religion, and we must trace in some of the Confucian rites beginnings, at least, of idolatry.

In the Imperial worship of Shang-ti the tablet before which the Emperor kneels is the only symbol employed. Never in the long history of the Chinese people has any attempt been made, so far as we know, to embody this conception of Shang-ti in a material image or idol. Some critics, who regard with suspicion the whole of this Imperial ceremony, draw attention strongly to the fact that near the tablet of Shang-ti are placed other tablets in honour of five former emperors, and in association with them, of the spirits of the sun, the moon, the stars, the

clouds, rain, wind and thunder. They have insisted upon the view that these powers are worshipped alongside of Shang-ti, and therefore that the worship offered cannot rightly be regarded as a worship of one God. In reply to this criticism it must be said that these other tablets do not occupy the position of honour. The tablet of Shang-ti stands alone, on a central table or altar on the highest part of the mound. These other tablets, on the contrary, are placed facing each other on the two sides of the mound, on a lower level and at some distance from the central tablet. Their presence during the ceremony seems to embody an idea which may be traced everywhere in connection with primitive ideas of sacrifice and worship. The ceremony is based on the idea of a feast, and these tablets of lesser powers, so far from indicating that they are worshipped as of equal rank with Shang-ti, only emphasise their inferiority. Shang-ti is regarded as the one supreme guest who is invited to honour the ceremony by his presence, and the Emperor, besides expressing his own unworthiness in words, calls in these lesser spirits to assist in doing honour to Shang-ti. The prayers are not addressed to them, but their names are invoked as representing, along with the Emperor and his ministers, all those lesser authorities who are employed by God in the government and care of a great Empire. The unquestioned supremacy over all the other spirits which is attributed to Shang-ti is still further emphasised by the terms used by the Emperor in speaking of himself. In making the change to which I have referred in the form of invocation, the Emperor of that time made a preliminary intimation of it to all the spirits. In addressing them he uses the first personal pronoun which is reserved for the Emperor alone, the equivalent of the sovereign "WE" of European rulers. But in addressing Shang-ti he always speaks of himself as "servant" or "minister."

At the same time it must be admitted that the mere

presence of these tablets is liable to misunderstanding. It is still more evident that the impersonation of the natural powers, from whatever motive, is one of the first steps which may, not unnaturally, lead on to idolatrous worship. It was so in the mythology of Greece and Rome, and it has been so in China. Strictly speaking, the Confucian religion as expounded by those writers who are recognised officially as orthodox, has never admitted the propriety of any idolatrous practice.

Twice every month the district mandarins of the whole Empire are instructed to read and explain to their people, either personally or by the appointment of scholars for the purpose, a series of moral maxims. One of these is invariably expounded as containing a strong denunciation of the whole mass of the popular idolatry. There are to-day no Confucian idols in China. There are temples in which worship is offered to Confucius, but he is not represented in them by any image. His name is inscribed on the tablet in the central hall, and the outer courts are lined with tablets representing his more distinguished followers, but the whole arrangement may be regarded as being of the nature of a memorial rather than as a form of idolatrous worship. But to get at the real nature of Confucianism we must not confine our view of it to the Imperial sacrifice alone.

In the older classical books not a few references may be found to rites practised by the ancient chiefs and leaders of the Chinese people which were of a religious kind, and had in them the elements of idolatry. Of these the practice of divination is one of the earliest. They used the stalks of the millet and the shell of the tortoise, with what manipulations is not now known, to extract from them auguries of the future. They observed the movements of the heavenly bodies, the flight of birds, and other phenomena of animal life for similar purposes ; and this idea of divination not only survives to the present

day in the popular idolatry, but gives to the priests of the idolatrous systems at once one of their largest sources of revenue and their strongest hold on the popular mind.

And in another direction Confucianism early departed from the pure worship of one God. In its earliest records we see already an extreme veneration for antiquity and for the great heroes and sages whose names were justly held in honour. Not content with recording their great deeds or wise utterances, their successors early began the practice of offering to them posthumous honours which must soon have assumed the form of acts of worship. A certain idea of immortality seems to have early rooted itself in the Chinese mind. The dead were regarded as having departed from the daily life of men, but as being still existent, and interesting themselves in the concerns of their descendants. Confucius himself represents the attitude of the ancient Chinese mind on this subject, when he is described as sacrificing to the dead as if they were present. Notwithstanding the dictum of Confucius that to make offerings to spirits with whom one has no personal concern is flattery, this habit of making offerings to the dead, once established, spread far and wide, and now forms the most deep-seated element in Chinese popular religion.

Everyone has heard of the worship of ancestors in China, but it is perhaps not usually understood what a much stronger hold this worship has on the minds of the people than the worship of idols. When we consider Buddhism and Taoism we find that the worship of idols is almost wholly a worship of fear, without any element of affection or regard. In the worship of ancestors as now practised fear undoubtedly plays a large part, but I think it would be unjust to the Chinese people to deny that their attachment to ancestral worship is in some degree connected with the best feelings of our common nature. There are expressions in the classical books,

and one meets with their equivalent in actual life, which seem to show that under the observances—to us so meaningless—of ancestral worship there is sometimes a real regard and affection for the dead. However this may be, it is certainly true that there is in the minds of the Chinese people no greater barrier to acceptance of the Gospel than the statement, so commonly repeated amongst them, that we teach them to despise their ancestors and repudiate their parents, or, as the Chinese idiom puts it more emphatically, that Christians have "no father and no mother." There are certain stock objections to Christian teaching which pass continually from mouth to mouth amongst our Chinese hearers. Many of these are used with little understanding and no feeling, but merely repeated as being the usual things to say, but this objection seems really to give a shock to the popular conscience, and is often repeated with genuine feeling. A Christian preacher may use great freedom in speaking of the idols, but he has to speak cautiously and with a certain tenderness of the practices and feelings connected with ancestral worship.

Every clan and section of a clan has its own ancestral temple, and few villages, however small, are without one at least. In these are gathered the ancestral tablets of preceding generations. The tablet itself consists of a small block of wood, eight inches to a foot in height, and a few inches in breadth, on the front of which is written the name of the person whom it represents. It is sawn through its thickness into two portions, and on the inner surface thus exposed the inscription of the name is repeated, and usually the date of birth and of death is added. This tablet is prepared soon after death takes place, and is retained during the lifetime of one or two generations in the home of the family. Offerings are made in front of it from time to time, especially on the birthday and the anniversary of death, and it is always

spoken of by the younger generations of the family as "our father and mother" or "our grandfather and grandmother." As the tablets of successive generations begin to take their places in the home, those of earlier date are removed to join those of past generations in the ancestral temple. In connection with the temple a careful record is kept of the names of all the male descendants who constitute the clan, and each succeeding generation in bequeathing property assigns certain portions of it to be used in all time coming for the maintenance of the offerings on behalf of the dead. In this way the system of ancestral worship not only forms a link between the living and the past generations of their clan, but it also makes a unity of all the contemporary branches who are descended from a common stock. Their religious interests and their rights of property combine to knit them together in one corporation, and give every individual an interest in the whole of his clan. They also give to the clan an enormous power of control over the action of every individual, and for this reason the system is one of the most powerful influences in resisting the Gospel. A man may become interested in the truth and have a real desire to follow it, and yet not have sufficient strength of conviction or power of will to withstand the accumulated influence of all his blood relations. On the other hand, the system is entirely different from the Hindoo caste. If the individual has sufficient strength of purpose to take his own course, and is sufficiently unworldly to give up certain claims to benefits arising out of the common property held for sacrificial purposes, he is usually allowed, not only to go his way unhindered, but also to retain his natural right to such property as is not applied to religious uses. The first individuals in a clan or village to take the step of professing Christianity must expect to suffer both ridicule and opposition, which may sometimes assume bitter and violent forms. But if by the grace of God

they are enabled to stand firm, they are usually not only able to secure their own liberty, but to make the way easier for others who follow in the same path.

The lack of enthusiasm or fanaticism which I have remarked as a feature of the Chinese temperament tells in favour of those who separate themselves from the ancestral system. Persecution is employed at the outset for the practical purpose of compelling them to abide in the old way, but when that fails to effect this purpose no personal bitterness seems to remain. They can retain their place in their village and in their home, earning their bread as before, and joining their own people in all the ordinary occupations of daily life, without any superstitious prejudices being entertained against them. The experience of a Hindoo convert is extremely different. From the moment he becomes a Christian his presence is a pollution to his home. If he should touch food, or any vessel used in cooking, the whole must be destroyed, and even his shadow falling upon any article of household use pollutes it beyond recovery. There is no such feeling in the Chinese mind, and by patience and forbearance the Chinese Christian can usually overcome the opposition of his friends. By continuance in welldoing he often rises to a higher position of confidence and regard than he had before his conversion.

The state worship of Shang-ti and the popular ancestral worship might almost be said to exhaust the strictly religious aspects of Confucianism, and you will gather from what I have said that both these systems were in existence long before the days of Confucius. But when we speak of Confucianism, whether on the theoretical or on the practical side, it suggests to us far more than these two forms of religious worship. Its most interesting and potent element is its practical teaching as a system of ethics. Profoundly representative of the Chinese temperament, Confucianism offers us little speculation as to

human nature, and none as to the being of God, or the profounder questions which lie at the root of spiritual religion. The existence of God was taken for granted from an early stage. The course of nature and the course of providence were regarded as sufficient justification for affirming both the being of God, His goodness, and His righteousness. But all this was rather taken for granted than reasoned out. It is referred to as occasion requires in the classical literature, but is never largely dwelt upon. Perhaps the most disappointing feature which one meets with in studying the course of Chinese thought in their literature is that the idea of God was clearer and more influential in the earliest literature than it is in the later. I have said that "Shang-ti" is the term used in the ancient classical books as the name of God. At the same time we find from an early period the word "Heaven" used as synonymous with the more personal name "Shang-ti." Probably the two names were used, as the names of "God" and "Heaven" are used among ourselves, without any intention of making a radical distinction between them: but the preference of the one name or the other, among the Chinese, as among us, doubtless points to a more or less vivid conception of the personality of the Being whom we so describe.

It is remarkable that when we come to the discourses of Confucius as recorded by his followers, the ancient usage of "Shang-ti" as the name of God is almost abandoned, and we find instead a frequent use of the more impersonal term "Heaven." This feature of the teaching of Confucius does not seem to be accidental. He not only shared the national repugnance to anything metaphysical, but seems to have greatly shrunk from any specific utterances with regard to supernatural subjects. Hence when he was led to speak of the power greater than himself of which he was abundantly, if vaguely, conscious, he usually spoke of "Heaven," not of "Shang-ti."

He believed that he was a teacher raised up by Heaven. "Alas!" he said, "there is no one that knows me." On being asked why he said so, he added, "I do not murmur against Heaven. I do not grumble against men. My studies lie low, and my penetration rises high. But there is Heaven—that knows me!" Again, when threatened with death by a high officer named Hwan T'uy, he said, "Heaven produced the virtue that is in me. What can Hwan T'uy do to me?" He was once seized and imprisoned for several days, and then said to those about him, "After the death of King Wan" (one of the ancient sages) "was not the cause of truth lodged in me? If Heaven had wished to let this cause of truth perish, then I, a future mortal, should not have got such a relation to that cause. While Heaven does not let the cause of truth perish, what can the people of K'wang do to me?"

From utterances like these it would appear that Confucius was not without reverence, but he had not the support of a clear and active faith in a personal God. As we shall shortly see, some excuse may be made for his attitude towards the whole subject of the supernatural. We read in the record of his conversations, "The subjects on which the Master did not talk were—prodigies, feats of strength, disorder, and spiritual beings." The explanation of this dislike is no doubt partly to be found in the fact that his time saw the rise of two great systems of superstition which led to the rapid growth of the Buddhist and Taoist religions. These baseless fancies, and the empty legends with which they were associated, were rightly repugnant to a sagacious mind like that of Confucius, and he did well to set his face against the rising tide of superstition. But whether he exhausted his duty in meeting a crisis in the religious history of his people by attempting or affecting to ignore it, is open to grave doubt. He refused to speak of what was

supernatural, and thereby dissociated himself from many false teachers of his day. But he also failed to meet the need, deep-seated in the heart of all races, for some definite teaching on the deepest questions, on which men's hearts may rest. If Confucius would not speak of supernatural beings, other teachers would, and his silence did not prevent the rapid growth and wide spread of the superstitions he so much disliked. It is still more to be regretted that in refusing to speak of the supernatural he seems also to have turned away his thoughts from the profoundest questions which every religious teacher must face, and to have weakened for himself and for his people that thought of the one personal God which was the grandest possession of their great ancestors. The whole sphere of supernatural religion, once ignored by Confucius and the greatest of his immediate followers, ceased for ever to be the supreme interest of the later generations of Chinese thinkers.

Confucius himself did not profess originality. He claimed to be a humble and studious follower of the ancients, and the painstaking transmitter of their teaching and example, but he did not regard it as within his province either to originate new ideas or to widen the scope of the old. He is sometimes spoken of as one of the greatest men in all history. He is represented as moulding to his likeness the innumerable millions of successive generations of Chinese. Certainly his word has been law throughout China for more than two thousand years, and his popular designation is "the Uncrowned King." To this day no Chinaman thinks it possible to set aside as wrong any saying of Confucius. Even intelligent Christians often speak as if the Chinese had erred only by departing from the teaching of Confucius, and on the other hand speak of his teaching as erring only by defect—a defect which can be made good by superadding Christian teaching. They find it

hard to admit to themselves that on any point Confucius himself can have been actually in the wrong. Now it is undoubtedly an amazing thing to find an ancient teacher and a mighty people two thousand years after his time in such complete accord, but I cannot feel sure that it justifies the inference often drawn from it that Confucius was a supremely great man, for there are two possible explanations of the fact. It is too readily assumed that Confucius has moulded the people to his own image. The truth may be that he was born a representative Chinaman, moulded by the generations who had gone before him, and that he gave expression once for all, and undoubtedly on a great scale, to the national temperament of his people.

He certainly did not impress upon his race characteristics originally alien to them. He was himself in all respects a typical Chinaman. His dislike for the metaphysical, his practical bent, and especially his firm belief in precedent as the fundamental law of life, were all features in which he reflected the characteristics of his race. In his own teaching he enormously exaggerated the influence which may be wielded by a single man, and one is inclined to give a wider interpretation than his own to his statement, that he was not a maker but only a transmitter.

Apart from the State religion and ancestral worship, the influence of Confucius is in no way connected with acts of worship. He is a great moral teacher, and might therefore be regarded as a religious influence, were it not for the fact, which is only too evident, that morals and religion are widely separated in China. It is rather as a philosopher than as a religious teacher that Confucius is looked to as an ethical authority. Indeed, one might say that the main outcome of Confucian ethics is hostile to the practice of religious worship. His leading doctrine seems to be the self-sufficiency of man. Man is born

with a sufficient moral nature, with implanted instincts and sanctions, to which if he will but give heed he must needs act rightly. This moral law within is no doubt reinforced by the example of ancient sages and the writings of their disciples. Humility finds a place in the system, and Confucius repeatedly confesses, with manifest sincerity, that he has not been able to attain his ideals. But the idea of sin, in a sense corresponding in any way to the Christian conception, is wholly wanting. The wicked man is the man who perversely rejects moral teaching, and does violence to his own nature. There is no adequate recognition of the subtle power of temptation, or of the dark possibilities of yielding to evil. Confucius therefore has no contribution to make to the profounder departments of religious discussion. But he has laid broad and deep the foundations of a moral scheme whose main outline is rightly drawn; and he has fixed in the minds of his countrymen a moral standard to which, on many of the great essentials of ethical teaching, we can confidently appeal. Important elements of the moral law are left out of the scheme. The parts are not always well proportioned, and are not stated in their due relations and subordination to each other. But on the broad questions of right and wrong, as between man and man, his decisions and standards are usually sound.

Perhaps the broadest criticism to be made on the Confucian scheme is that it regards man too much as a member of a community, or rather of a state, and too little in his capacity as an individual. Hence moderation, and the due observance of a man's limits, form the main elements of virtue. There are five relationships which are described as summing up the whole duty of man. They are those between sovereign and subject, between father and son, between elder brother and younger brother, between husband and wife, and between friend and friend. The first two of these may be regarded as substantially

one. The sovereign is looked upon as the father of his people, and filial piety is the foundation of Confucian morals. Both in the classical books and in the popular literature there are many striking sayings which enforce the duty of filial piety. But whilst the duty of children to their parents is constantly insisted upon, there is almost no corresponding treatment of the duty of parents to their children. In the practical development of the subject it is carried to great extremes, some of which are not a little ridiculous, while some are morally disastrous. One important outcome of this theory of filial piety is the attribution by law of absolute power to a father over his son throughout life, including even the power of life and death. For a father to slay his son is an exercise of paternal authority with which the law has no right to concern itself. But if a son slay his father, no matter with what extenuating circumstances, not only is the matter regarded as a crime of the deepest dye, but it is visited with death by the cruellest tortures, and the whole neighbourhood is involved in the disgrace and punishment of the crime. The parricide's teacher shares in his punishment; the magistrate in whose district the crime is committed is dismissed from office, and everything is done to impress the popular mind with detestation of the crime. A painful illustration of this view occurred lately near Shanghai. A little child at play in its own home while swinging a piece of wood accidently struck his mother, and she, being in weak health, shortly afterwards died. The child was regarded as too young for the immediate infliction of the full penalty, and was therefore doomed to grow up under sentence, the sentence to be fully carried out when it reached the age of thirteen years, although there was not the smallest suspicion of any intention on the child's part to injure its mother. One of the favourite disciples of Confucius is praised for giving a striking example of filial piety. His filial piety showed

itself in this, that he divorced his wife because in stewing pears for his mother she did not cook them to the old lady's liking. Another testimony to the same exaggeration of the idea of filial piety is to be seen in almost every considerable town in the Empire. The streets and roadways are often spanned by elaborate memorial archways with flattering inscriptions in memory of women who have left an example of filial piety. Their husbands had died, and they had showed their piety to the parents by refusing to marry again. Their virtue was not regarded as consisting in showing honour to the husband's memory, but in refusing to leave the home of his parents and enter another family. But a lamentable feature of these memorials is this, that in many cases the widow showed her devotion to her husband's parents not only by refusing marriage into another family, but by also committing suicide lest she should become a burden to them. When we speak therefore of filial piety as one of the root virtues of Chinese life, one must remember that it has been so exaggerated and perverted that it has often lost its character of virtue altogether.

For our present purpose the main question with regard to the moral ideas of Confucius is this: What practical effect have they had on the moral conceptions and the actual life of the common people? This question is for many reasons not easy to answer. A vast majority of the people have received no such education as would qualify them to read and understand the classical books of the Confucian school. Their knowledge of the teaching of Confucius is fragmentary and vague. It is derived chiefly from isolated sayings which have become popular proverbs, and are so handed down from generation to generation. They pass from mouth to mouth as quotations appropriate to the incidents of life, and are often used with no reference to the context from which they were originally drawn.

The enormous weight attributed to the authority of Confucius has done something to lessen the sense of individual moral responsibility. A man's appeal on moral questions is not so much to the voice of his own conscience as to the utterances and maxims of antiquity. On the other hand, the principles of Confucian morals for the most part confirm the universal judgments of the natural conscience, and have had on the whole a healthful influence on the moral life, and still more on the moral judgments of the people. Familiarity with the impressive enunciation of great principles is too often, in China as elsewhere, regarded as a sufficient substitute for the life to which they point. But this is rather one of the sad anomalies of our common human nature than a defect inherent in the Confucian teaching. Yet it sharply emphasises the fact that what China needs is not so much a new set of rules for living, as a new and energising spring of life.

LECTURE IV

THE RELIGIONS OF CHINA

Part II.—Taoism and Buddhism

Taoism.—Taoism, like Confucianism, is of native origin in the main, though some writers, both native and foreign, have tried to trace resemblances between Taoist and Buddhist literature, which they attribute to their having drawn from common sources. It has even been argued that the Tao, or Way, and the "Wu-wei," or Inaction, of Taoism are simply the "Noble Path" and the Nirvana of Buddhism in another form. I cannot pursue this discussion here.

Like Confucianism also, Taoism contains two systems under one name. The first is a system of philosophy set forth by the almost legendary founder of this religion, and by a few of his better known early followers. This philosophy is not known to the bulk of the Chinese people, and its literature is not usually studied even by professional native scholars. Having spoken of the Taoist literature and philosophy in a previous lecture, I shall not dwell further on them now.

But Taoism has another side, by which it has most influenced Chinese life. This consists of a vast congeries of fables and superstitions of which it is hardly possible to give a rational account. Its popular aspects have little apparent relation with its philosophic character.

Seeking for a link of connection, we might find it perhaps in the first paragraph of Lao Tsze's great book the "Tao Teh King," or "Treatise on the Absolute

and the Actual." "Tao" means a way or road, and is used by Lao Tsze to describe the unconditioned cause of all things, while its correlate, "Teh," or "Attainment," is applied to the concrete embodiments of it. The Tao is thus the "Nameless," or the Absolute; while the Teh is the "Named," or the Actual. The treatise begins accordingly thus:—"The Tao that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Tao. The name that can be named is not the enduring and unchanging name. As having no name it is the originator of heaven and earth; as having a name it is the mother of all things. . . . Under these two aspects it is really the same; but as development takes place, it receives different names. Together we call them the Mystery. Where the mystery is the deepest is the gate of all that is subtle and wonderful."

These last words strike the keynote of Taoism, and mark its point of strongest contrast with Confucianism. In Confucianism there is no room for mystery. A clear definition, an embodied example, an established precedent, an indisputable maxim, an expressive propriety—these form the machinery of the Confucian ethic. But the Taoist writers, with a braver outlook, saw that "where the mystery is deepest is the gate of all that is subtle and wonderful." It is the lesson so often illustrated in physical science, that where our explanations break down, and residual phenomena, in thought or experience, occur, is the place where new and widening truth comes to light. In the recognition of this lesson lies at once the strength and the weakness of Taoism. In its strength it has given us the Taoist metaphysic, which for freshness, depth, and thorough-going idealism, has no Confucian rival; in its weakness it has produced the imbecile vagaries of Taoist alchemy, geomancy, and general hocus-pocus.

The Taoist doctors early acquired the reputation of deep knowledge of the powers of nature. Hence arose

discussions about the philosopher's stone, the pill of immortality, and the elixir of life. Many legends arose of sages and heroes who were reported to have attained to an immortal life, to have visited the stars, or to have at their call the services of supernatural beings. The worship of these sages, and of imaginary beings who were supposed to embody the powers of nature, rapidly grew into a vast system of religious observances. The professors of Taoism taught the art of prolonging life by the regulation of the breath and other exercises. They also developed the theory of good and bad luck which, under the name of "Fung-shuy," or "Wind and Water," teaches that the fortunes of men are vitally connected with the configuration of hills, the course of rivers, and very specially are determined by the contour of the ground in sites for dwelling-houses and positions for graves. They professed to communicate with the invisible world, and to give responses to enquirers who seek to pry into the future. Hence spiritualism, fortune-telling, geomancy, and magic, have all found a congenial home and reached an enormous development in the hands of the later Taoists. It is not unnaturally this superstitious side of Taoism that has most largely affected the popular mind. There is a recognised head of the religion who is sometimes spoken of in foreign books as the Taoist Pope. His office is hereditary, and he is recognised by the Imperial Government as the head of the whole Taoist community.

It was the first beginnings of this system which perhaps caused, and to some extent justified, the declinature of Confucius to speak on supernatural subjects. His countrymen have not imitated him in this reserve, and while the Chinese classics confine themselves for the most part to what is rigidly practical, historic and ethical, the popular literature is full of the wildest and most luxuriant superstition. Among the temples to be found everywhere are many of those to Taoist deities, such as the god of

wealth, the god of literature, the god of war, besides the shrines which are continually arising at spots where any alleged supernatural manifestation has taken place. Trees, stones, rivers, animals, are worshipped indiscriminately, and all this unregulated superstition may be regarded as forming part of the Taoist system.

In one sphere it links itself closely with orthodox Confucianism; that is to say, in rites connected with the burial of the dead. In these, which are largely regulated by Confucian tradition, place is found for the teachings and practice of Taoism. It is the Taoist doctor who chooses a lucky spot for a grave and the lucky day for burial. He studies the contour of the ground in the neighbourhood of the grave, advises the direction in which the body should be laid, and suggests all the methods by which the survivors hope to bury the dead in such a way as not only to secure a peaceful resting place for them, but also to make the place of their burial a source of good fortune and blessing to their descendants. On this system every Chinese family spends from time to time a large portion of its means, and I have been assured that in the Swatow district seven or eight-tenths of all the law suits that come before the courts arise out of disputes about graves and grave sites. The Taoist theory of securing the repose of the dead and the felicity of survivors seems to lead to more disturbance of the peace of the living than all other causes put together.

Taoism, like Buddhism, possesses a popular religious literature, one department of which is devoted to morals and conduct. But a curious feature of these books is that their ethical principles, rules of conduct and grounds of appeal, and even their technical phraseology, are drawn in varying proportions from all three of the popular religions. I have showed one of these tracts to a Confucian scholar, asking him to which of the religions it belonged. At a hasty glance his eye caught some of the moral

maxims, and he replied, "This is Confucian." Reading further he presently said, "This is Buddhist." Finally I showed him from the preface that the book professes to be the work of Lu Yen, a famous Taoist doctor, born about 755 B.C., who is said to have flourished as a hero and dragon slayer for over four hundred years, and who has been worshipped since the twelfth century.

In this work human actions in the various relations of life are classified, and to every action, good or evil, a numerical value of merit or demerit is attached, in a carefully regulated scale of which an exact account can be kept. Blank pages, or forms of account, are inserted, with a space for every day in a month, in which are to be entered the sums of merits acquired and demerits incurred on each day. At the end of the month a balance is to be struck, and the merits and demerits severally are to be added up, and the resultant balance noted, and carried forward to the next month's account. The morality described in this analysis is often of a high order, but it often degenerates into a bare ceremonialism of no moral value. One principle is recognised throughout which implies real moral insight. When a good deed is set down at a certain positive value, it is not to be assumed that the corresponding evil may be estimated on the negative side at the same amount. Its value is not only negative, but is sometimes treble, sometimes tenfold in amount. In one case it is estimated as infinitely greater, outweighing the corresponding good deed. We feel a touch of brotherhood in this recognition of the disadvantage at which we wage our ethical warfare :—

> "Facilis descensus Averno ;
> Noctes atque dies patet atri janua Ditis :
> Sed revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad auras,
> Hoc opus, hic labor est. Pauci, quos aequus amavit
> Jupiter, aut ardens evexit ad aethera virtus,
> Dis geniti, potuere."

The following are a few examples of this scale :—

"For exhorting Parents to abandon evil, and practise what is good :—	In small matters, 1 good mark.
	In greater „ 3 „ marks.
For seeing the faults of Parents, and being unable to exhort them :—	In small matters, 10 bad marks.
	In greater „ 30 „ marks.
For showing warm love to wife and children, and making light of Father and Mother :—	100 bad marks.
For forbidding wife and daughters to gad about seeing stage-plays :—	Per month, 50 good marks.
For allowing wife and daughters to go to the temples and burn incense :—	Each time, 10 bad marks."

It is curious to notice in these last two instances that the acts which are thus condemned as immoral, are at the same time highly religious, the stage-plays being usually performed in honour of the idols.

"For being proud towards equals and despising the poor :—	Each time, 5 bad marks.
For arranging a marriage, . .	50 good marks.
For abstaining for life from beef and dog-flesh, per annum :—	5 good marks.
For successfully exhorting against infanticide (female) :—	30 good marks.
For picking up things lost and restoring to owner :—	Per value of 100 cash, 2 good marks.
For picking up things lost and keeping them :—	Per value of 100 cash, 3 bad marks.
For writing obscene books, or drawing obscene pictures, to the injury of the world :—	Unlimited bad marks."

In this singular book the precepts of Confucian ethics are enforced by the sanctions of Buddhist superstition, and regulated by a Taoist method. It is a type of Chinese popular religion, with its strange commingling of streams drawn from many remote sources, but harmonised by the colouring which all have drawn from the native soil.

We now come to *Buddhism*, the third of the three

popular religions of China. In Confucianism and Taoism we saw that there was a philosophical side to each of these systems, and also a popular side, and that the connection, and sometimes the antagonisms, between these two aspects complicate not a little the religious problem. In Buddhism the problem becomes more complex still, as it is extremely difficult to give a clear account of Chinese Buddhism which shall convey, at the same time, a fair impression of the real place occupied by it in the religious life of the people.

We find in it in an extreme degree a difficulty which is perhaps little understood by Christian writers on non-Christian religions. The difficulty is that in these so-called ethnic religions the whole attitude of mind, both of teachers and of taught, is extremely remote from our own. We find Christianity to be essentially a historical religion; and whilst there is much detail in the history which does not seem to have any profoundly religious significance, yet we cannot dissociate the religion from the history. Indeed, we feel it to be vital to our hold of the religion to vindicate the history and to demonstrate its reality and genuineness. The historical facts of the Old Testament and the historical facts of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are essential to our conception of the Christian religion. We feel strongly the need for principles which can be firmly grasped, which are consistently knit together, which root themselves in the history, and which justify themselves in their practical development in our actual religious experience. Now, this attitude of mind, which seems to us so essential, is entirely unlike anything that we meet with in the development of the ethnic religions of the East. They feel no need either of definite history or of firmly grasped principles. They are the outcome of instincts, longings, or repulsions, and often of fancies, each of which is yielded to or opposed according to the humour of the moment.

They do not rest, and are not even supposed to rest, upon definite facts. No effort is made to bring them into a harmonious and self-supporting system. They do not represent definite mental processes or philosophic conclusions arrived at by logical arguments. They are rather like the exercise of a child's mind, which delights in imagining things for the sake of the effort of imagination itself. The fancies and thoughts that rise are welcomed as fresh material for experiment in thinking. Their value does not depend upon their validity, but rather on their fruitfulness of suggestion. Hence the fantastic waywardness which characterises many of the religious speculations of the East. It is therefore hardly possible for us, with our Western methods of thought, and with the regard for truth and reality which Christianity has implanted, or at least has cultivated, in the Western mind, to put before ourselves in their real relations the various parts of a system such as Buddhism. It is still more difficult for us to appreciate the atmosphere in which it has become what it is, and the colouring which it wears to an oriental mind.

In speaking of Confucianism and Taoism we had to deal with systems based upon a substantial and interesting literature. Buddhism in its later developments has produced an enormous literature; but during the early ages of Buddhist teaching in India, writing was an art but little known. We have therefore to deal with ideas which were not at first written down in permanent form. They were delivered orally, and passed from mouth to mouth, so that it is difficult now to ascertain what their earliest forms were.

Buddhism took its rise, as you know, in Northern India, and its early history belongs rather to India than to China. It is not needful, and would hardly be relevant, to repeat here in detail the story of Gautama, but it cannot be wholly omitted. Everyone has read how the prince Gautama, or Siddharta, son of a king in Nepal, was born

about the year 620 B.C.,* and grew up in happy ignorance of the suffering and death that reign in the world. Anxious to keep him from all knowledge of pain and sorrow, his father kept him carefully secluded in a beautiful garden, whose high walls formed for him the boundary of the world. These precautions naturally kindled in the boy's mind a desire to know what lay beyond. After careful prearrangement the prince was allowed to drive out through the gardens and streets in the neighbourhood of the palace, but notwithstanding all precautions he saw sights which changed the whole current of his life. I will read the brief summary of these given by Sir Monier Williams in his book on Buddhism. "There appeared before his eyes in one of the streets the form of a decrepit old man, his skin shrivelled, his head bald, his teeth gone, his body infirm and bent. A staff supported his tottering limbs, as he stood right across the path of the prince's advancing chariot.

"Seeing this aged person, Siddharta inquired of his charioteer: 'What human form is this, so miserable and so distressing, the like of which I have never seen before?'

"The charioteer replied: 'This is what is called an old man.

"The prince again inquired: 'And what is the exact meaning of this expression "old"?'

"The charioteer answered: 'Old age implies the loss of bodily power, decay of the vital functions, and failure of mind and memory. This poor man before you is old and approaching his end.'

"Then asked the prince: 'Is this law universal?'

"'Yes,' he replied, 'this is the common lot of all living creatures. All that is born must die.'

"Soon afterwards another strange sight presented itself —a sick man, worn by disease and suffering, pale and miserable, scarcely able to draw his breath, was seen tottering on the road.

* Or 500 B.C. by another reckoning; but the date is quite uncertain.

"Then the prince inquired of his charioteer: 'Who is this unhappy being?'

"The charioteer replied: 'This is a sick man, and such sickness is common to all.'

"Soon afterwards there passed before them a corpse, borne on a bier.

"Then asked the prince: 'Who is this borne onwards on his bed, covered with strangely-coloured garments, surrounded by people weeping and lamenting?'

"'This,' replied the charioteer, 'is called a dead body; he has ended his life; he has no further beauty of form, and no desires of any kind; he is one with the stones and the felled tree; he is like a ruined wall or fallen leaf; no more shall he see his father or mother, brother or sister, or other relatives; his body is dead and your body also must come to this.'

"Next day on his going out by a different gate there appeared advancing with measured steps a man with a shaven crown and monk's robe, his right shoulder bare, a religious staff in his right hand, and a mendicant's alms-bowl in his left. 'Who is this,' the prince inquired, 'proceeding with slow and dignified steps, looking neither to the right hand nor to the left, absorbed in thought, with shaven head and garments of reddish colour?'

"'This man,' said the charioteer, 'devotes himself to charity, and restrains his appetites and his bodily desires. He hurts nobody, but does good to all, and is full of sympathy for all.'

"Then the prince asked the man himself to give an account of his own condition.

"He answered: 'I am called a homeless ascetic; I have forsaken the world, relatives and friends; I seek deliverance for myself and desire the salvation of all creatures, and I do harm to none.'

"After hearing these words the prince went to his father and said, 'I wish to become a wandering ascetic, and to

seek Nirvana; all worldly things, O king, are changeable and transitory.'"

The heart of the young prince was filled with disgust at the pleasures with which he was surrounded, and with a longing to break away from them, to go out and become the saviour of suffering humanity. Leaving his palace by night, he became a wandering thinker and enquirer, burdened with an overwhelming desire to find a way of escape from the common doom of sorrow. The Buddhist legends narrate in great detail the experiences through which he passed. At length, after long thought and enduring endless temptation, he found his way to the light. It is not pretended that the light was a divine revelation given to him from without. It is always represented as an illumination from within, the result of his own thinking and self-conquest. It was at this point in his career that Siddharta or Gautama became entitled to the name "Buddha," a name which signifies "the intelligent" or "the enlightened."

At this stage of the development of Buddhism occurs one of the most striking and also one of the most creditable of its many inconsistencies. Strictly speaking, the fundamental principle to which Gautama had worked his way would have required him to cease from this point all effort and all intercourse with men; but having attained, as he believed, the light for himself, he was anxious to impart it to others and devote himself to a life of toil for the illumination and deliverance of his fellowmen. Thus Buddhism became from the first an essentially missionary religion. But it won its way, not like Muhammadanism by the sword, but by patient and persuasive teaching. Gautama the Buddha went to Benares, and began there to teach his followers. The outlines of his early teaching are briefly summarised in what are called the four noble truths. These are—

1. That all existence necessarily involves pain and suffering, and is therefore essentially evil.

2. That all suffering is caused by desire, whether of sensual pleasure, of wealth, or of continued existence.

3. That on the other hand cessation of suffering is simultaneous with the extinction of desire.

4. That extinction of desire, and therefore freedom from all suffering, is attained by perseverance in right belief, right resolve, right speech, right work, right livelihood, right exercise, rightmindedness, and right mental concentration.

This is described as the eightfold path.

His teaching was speedily accepted by some sixty disciples whom he sent forth to spread it. This teaching had been at first a revolt against Brahmanism, and is to a considerable extent conditioned by the Brahmanistic teaching which preceded it. After attaining wide popularity in India it has now, since about the fifth century, almost entirely disappeared from it. The home of Buddhism is now in Ceylon, Burmah, Siam, China, Thibet and Japan. Having in the lapse of so long a period of time passed into the hands of so many different nationalities, Buddhism has of course assumed many varieties of form, and can hardly be spoken of as a consistent whole. From the first it has contained elements which are in themselves inconsistent with each other. Again, its earlier and its later teaching are widely different. In passing into China, Indian beliefs and legends have been transformed into Chinese forms. For example, one of the chief personalities of Indian Buddhism is Avalokiteshwara, who is spoken of in Indian tradition as a son of Amita-Buddha, who is the celestial counterpart of the deified man, Gautama Buddha. In passing from Indian into Chinese mythology, this deity is transformed into a goddess with various titles, such as the "Merciful One," or "Kwan-shi-yin," that is, the "Hearer of Prayer." Chinese tradition makes her a native goddess, describing her as the daughter of Chwang Wang, a

BUDDHA IN JAPAN: "DAIBUTSU"

sovereign of China in 696 B.C. To the Western mind this identification labours under the serious disadvantage of placing her date considerably before the birth of Gautama Buddha himself. But, as I have explained, the fear of historical inconsistency is never allowed to restrict either speculation or affirmation in the development of Buddhism.

Buddhism must always be regarded as an outcome of the popular Brahmanism, which was the prevailing religion of ancient India. Gautama the Buddha carried with him some of the teachings of Brahmanism, and giving these new forms, and rejecting others, he fashioned out of them the fundamental ideas of his own system. His leading desire was, first of all, escape for himself from the misery of the world, and next, as an outcome of this, to work out a salvation for other men. Brahmanism had taught that there were three ways of salvation—

1. By the use of sacrifices, rites and penances.
2. By devotion of heart to particular deities.
3. What was called the way of knowledge, which seems by common consent to have been regarded as the highest of the three.

This was the starting point of Gautama's teaching. Rejecting the first two as unworthy, he taught that the way of escape from the miseries of existence lay in knowledge ; but the knowledge spoken of is of a special and limited kind. It does not include the knowledge of God, and scarcely implies the knowledge of oneself which has sometimes by other teachers been made the basis of morality. It is rather knowledge regarded as an awakening from habitual and universal illusion. He taught that men suffer from the illusion of personality, that is, of attaching undue importance to their own individual conscious existence. An inevitable result of this illusion is the natural clinging to life, which produces inborn desire for all those things which apparently contribute to the

maintenance and the pleasure of life. The essential knowledge of which the Buddha offered himself as teacher, consist in the discovery that all these ideas to which men so obstinately cling are delusive. Salvation depends upon the knowledge that existence is itself the source and cause of all our evils, and that deliverance is to be found not in the way of improving the conditions of existence, but in persistently following a course which will ultimately lead to its extinction. Hence, renunciation in all its forms becomes the vital essence of the religious life. But renunciation is not thought of as a self-discipline by which the individual soul is to be improved and trained for better things. It is rather thought of as a method by which individuality may be gradually extinguished.

The doctrine of transmigration thus lies very near the roots of Buddhism, but it is a mistake to speak, as is often done, of the transmigration of souls. Strictly speaking, Buddhism denies the real existence of the individual soul, or admits it only as one of the transitory evils from which we must make it our aim to be delivered. There is really no room for the existence of the individual soul, and neither is there room for the existence of God, in the Buddhistic conception of the universe. Existence is represented as confined to six forms of lower and higher degrees, all of them inferior to the ultimate aim, which is that of non-existence. The forms of living beings are these—(1) gods; (2) men; (3) demons; (4) animals; (5) ghosts, which are the recent inhabitants of the earth existing now in an indeterminate condition, still troubled with the passions of their earthly life, while cut off from the means of satisfying them; (6) beings in hell undergoing punishment.

These are the various forms of being, in one or other of which the individual life, as long as it lasts, will always be found. The aim which Buddha set before his disciples was to pass from the lower to the higher of these forms of being not with the aim of resting ultimately in the

active and conscious enjoyment of the highest, but of passing out of it into a state of non-existence. It has often been objected to the doctrine of transmigration that it is opposed to experience, on the ground that we have no recollection of past states of existence. But this objection, according to the Buddhist view, falls to the ground for two reasons: first, because experience is not regarded as the test of truth; and second, because it is founded on the idea, of which we can hardly rid ourselves, of the persistent existence of a conscious soul. The Buddhist doctrine is not that of a transmigration of souls existing consciously in various forms, but only a transmigration of what is called "karma." Karma is sometimes spoken of as the accumulated merit belonging to the individual, but it would be better represented by the mathematical conception of the actual value, at any moment, of the ever changing resultant of an infinite past series of acts and experiences. In short, we have no recollection of our past because in philosophic Buddhism there is no "we." There is really no continuous personal existence. But every act, and all the acts and experiences that make up a life, leave behind them an unconscious resultant force which embodies itself, according to its nature, in various forms of being. When the good has predominated over the evil, the embodiment will take a higher form; when the evil over the good, it will take a lower; but there can never be rest or permanence in any stage.

When the question is raised, What is good and what is evil? it is not to be answered by reference to any permanent moral law, and still less to any thought of the will of a personal God. It must be answered only with reference to the ultimate end, which is the hope of escape from these ever-recurring cycles of existence. Hence desire of all kinds is the greatest of evils, because it involves a clinging to the present stage, whatever that may be. This thought of transmigration is frequently

embodied in Buddhistic writings under the symbol of a turning wheel, and this is applied both to what is called the law, and also to the experiences of the individual life.

The ultimate aim is the hope of extinction which is described by the Indian word Nirvana. The term Nirvana is borrowed from the extinction of a lamp, which becomes the symbol of ultimate perfection, and it is one of the curious ironies of literature that the author of this metaphor should be most inappropriately spoken of by Western admirers as "The Light of Asia." He certainly taught a moral law which in many of its elements coincides with the requirements of universal morality. One of its earliest statements lays down the following five rules :—(1) kill no living thing ; (2) do not steal ; (3) do not commit adultery; (4) do not lie ; (5) drink no strong drink. To these were added from time to time many other prohibitions and commandments, and at least in early times all seem to have been pervaded by a spirit of gentleness, one might almost say by a law of love, which one cannot help feeling to be the outcome of the gentle and kindly nature of Gautama Buddha himself. As one reads the Buddhist books one is tempted to believe that unselfishness of a high order is the prevailing sentiment of this religion, but on searching a little deeper one finds that this apparent unselfishness does not consist in yielding one's own claims to the rights and claims of others, but rather in the effort to withdraw oneself, for what are ultimately selfish reasons, from all connection with the world of existence around us. Killing, stealing, and so on, are not vices because in them we do wrong to our fellowmen, nor because in them we violate the law of God. They are evils because they minister to our own passion-nature. They strengthen all those passions which are only various forms of our clinging to personal existence. They therefore tend to prolong our entanglement in the circling wheel of life, and they are to be avoided, not for the sake of self-discipline in

order to the development of an abiding moral personality, but in order to cut off one by one all the ties that bind us to existence, which is the root cause of all our troubles.

The whole theory of transmigration is a theory of prolonged progress from the complicated existence in which we now find ourselves, with all its associated miseries and sorrows, towards ultimate extinction or non-existence. Its course, whether upward or downward, depends wholly upon ourselves. The Buddha is regarded as the Saviour of men, not because he can do anything in aid of the individual soul, but because he first lifted the veil and revealed to men the inevitable connection between existence and suffering, and taught them that existence itself is really an illusion produced by the depraved action of our own minds. The individual must work out his own salvation, not by aiming at higher moral activities for the development of the good that is in himself, but by cutting off all activities, good and evil alike, by which the toils and miseries of existence may be prolonged. Thus, in this narrow sense, the Buddha is true to his original title; he is an enlightener rather than a saviour. Every man, being thrown upon his own resources, is taught to keep a watchful account of his own actions, with a view to testing his progress towards the gaol.

But the gaol itself is not really a moral one, and the two allied doctrines of Karma and Nirvana, on which the system depends, are too ethereal for popular apprehension. Men can understand the elementary distinctions between right and wrong, and can form some understanding of a balance between the good and evil actions of their own lives, but the abstract idea of a moral resultant which comes down from a vast series of previous existences, and which is to be carried forward to a series not less vast in the future, is too subtle and too far away from daily life to carry with it much moral weight. It does not constrain the conscience, and it almost eludes the grasp of the

imagination. Besides, the aim presented to the Buddhist disciple, of reaching at last the condition of Nirvana, is too indefinite for practical use. Thus there inevitably arises in the Buddhist system another line of teaching which has practically displaced, at least in China, the idea of Nirvana from the minds of the people. According to this later teaching there is a system of material heavens abundantly supplied with material gratifications, and this appeals much more strongly to the popular mind. When this stage of Buddhistic development is reached, we are already a long way from the mental attitude of Gautama the Buddha who founded the system. His elementary ideas were founded at least upon a genuine analysis of his own feelings and experiences. For the development of later Buddhism large drafts were made upon the imagination of its teachers and the credulity of its followers. For this reason much stress is laid in some of the Buddhist books on the need of "faith." One of the later Buddhist books written by a Chinese author says: "The want of faith is called doubt, from which the numberless errors that exist in the world are produced. Faith is the wide thoroughfare for entering on the path of wisdom; doubt is the great enemy of religion. Faith may be compared to a propitious wind wafting a boat down a river; doubt to the whirling eddies of the tide in which a boat from morning till night constantly revolves. Buddha can save all sentient creatures, but he cannot rescue men who have no faith. There are three chief reasons why men have not faith. The first is this: they say 'How is it possible that beyond this world in which we live, its sun and moon, there can yet be other worlds and systems of worlds?' The second is this: they say, 'When men are dead and their bodies corrupted, and their vital spirits dispersed, how is it possible that the soul can rise to happiness or sink to misery?' The third is this: they say, 'It is impossible to believe that any man can attain to the con-

dition of perfect enlightenment,' as much as to say that what the ear or the eye cannot apprehend ought not to be believed, but should be persistently denied. On the same ground, men who live in the north ought not to believe that there are merchant ships covering the southern seas so vast that they can carry burdens of ten thousand piculs; and men of Kiang-nan ought not to believe that the nomads of the north live day by day under tents capable of sheltering one thousand men. So it is men object to believe in the Paradise of Buddha and that every good man shall go there and be happy; whereas they should rather say, 'That which the eye cannot see is justly elevated as a reward fit for the soul.'"

The Paradise of Buddha is a very different conception from that of Nirvana, the extinction of existence, which Buddha himself set before his followers. But it appeals much more to the popular mind, and in China you may meet with multitudes of Buddhists who, at least, speak of the western heavens as an object of hope, while you will hardly find any who have grasped the conception of Nirvana. The whole tendency of later Buddhism has been in the same direction. Abstract conceptions have given place to the most material ideas; Nirvana to the Paradise of Buddha; the cultivation of morality to the practice of rites and ceremonies; and self-discipline and contemplation to the worship of idols. The endless developments of this so-called "faith" of Buddhism form a strong contrast with the robust realism of Confucianism. Confucius erred in confining his attention too much to what is seen and tangible and the cultivation of morality in its most baldly practical form. He shut out his followers, as we have seen, from all effort or speculation which pointed in the direction of the supernatural. We are almost reconciled to the strict limits which he set to his ethical teaching when we contemplate the results of an opposite course in the case of Buddhism.

It was a critical time both for Buddhism and for China when the religion of Gautama, leaving its ancient home, began to find its way eastward. This took place about the time of the Christian era, partly through Buddhist missionaries who passed through Central Asia and brought their teaching into China, partly and perhaps more efficaciously through the efforts of Chinese pilgrims who, either by command of the Emperors or in pursuance of their own search after truth, went westwards, encountered Buddhism in its own domains, and brought back with them to China Buddhist books, images, and teachers.

There is a story that the Emperor Ming of the Han Dynasty in the year 61 A.D. had a dream in which he saw a golden figure by which he was told to send to the West in search of the true doctrine. This story is supported by one of the early Buddhist pilgrims from China who has left an account of his travels. He says that when crossing the Indus on his entry into India, he was asked by the Buddhist monks of the place whether it could be known when the law of Buddha first went to the East. He said that there were missionaries from India who crossed the Indus carrying with them Buddhist sutras and books of discipline after the setting up of the image of Maitreya, rather more than three hundred years after the Nirvana of Buddha, "which," he adds, "may be referred to the reign of King P'ing of the Chow dynasty." This statement is certainly erroneous, because it would throw back the death of Buddha to the eleventh century before the Christian era, whereas it certainly took place not less than six or seven hundred years later. But while his dates are certainly incorrect, there is probably some substantial truth in his account of the first preaching of Buddhism in China. He goes on to say: "If it had not been through that Maitreya, the great spiritual master, who could have caused the three precious ones to be proclaimed so far, and the people of these border

A WAYSIDE SHRINE

lands to know our law? We know of a truth that the opening of a mysterious propagation is not the work of man, and so the dream of the Emperor Ming of Han had its proper cause."

Probably more was done for the introduction of Buddhism into China by the Buddhist pilgrims from the Chinese side than by the Indian missionaries. At all events we have fuller information as to their activity in the search for the Buddhist doctrine and in its propagation in China. The pilgrim whom I have quoted was a native of Ch'ang-an, in North China. He has left a careful account of his travels, which has been repeatedly translated into English. He left his home about the year 399 A.D. and travelled westward through Tibet, and then south and west to Peshawur, thence crossing the Himalayas into Northern India, and finding his way after many wanderings to the early seats of Buddhism, and finally to the sacred city of Benares. After spending many years in his quest he finally took ship from the mouth of the Ganges, and sailing by way of Ceylon and Japan, returned to his native land, and took up his abode in the city of Nanking. Thus, by the combined efforts of Indian missionaries and Chinese pilgrims, books, images, and priests were introduced into China, and the Buddhist creed and worship were eagerly cultivated at the Chinese court.

In China Buddhism encountered two rival faiths. From what I have said of the Confucian system, you will readily gather that it had little in common with Buddhistic teaching except in regard to those outlines of practical morals which, being drawn from the natural conscience, are essentially alike in all sane religions. In Taoism, on the other hand, it met with a system whose teachings were strangely like its own. Between Lao-tsze's doctrine of "wu-wei" or "doing nothing," as the highest moral attainment, and the Buddhist doctrine of seeking extrication

from the entanglements of existence, there is no very wide severance. Besides, Taoism and Buddhism alike had entered by this time upon that course of materialising their conceptions which has led in both religions to their endless developments of idolatry. Buddhist and Taoist sages alike were represented by images which received idolatrous worship. And thus the two creeds largely intermingled, and each has been to a great extent shaped and coloured by the other. The course taken by Confucius of discountenancing all search after the supernatural and the unseen, so far from checking the rising tide of superstition, rather gave it free course. Men found that they could follow the ethical teaching of Confucius and call themselves his disciples, and yet super-add to this in other departments all the extravagances of the Buddhist and Taoist idolatries. Hence it is that the Chinese religion of to-day has become an inextricable blending of the three systems. The distinctly moral elements of philosophical and religious teaching are common to all, and on these points there is no controversy between them. Confucianism continues officially to frown upon and denounce the two idolatries as systems of vulgar superstition ; but with the same worldly wisdom which was part of the statecraft of ancient Rome, it has seen its way to use them for political purposes. It has not only tolerated these two faiths, which seem in their whole spirit so alien from itself, it has even sanctioned their establishment within the Chinese Empire as religious systems with definite official recognition and support. There are official Superiors of the Buddhist religion, recognised by the Chinese Government in every district of the Empire, who are responsible to the local magistrates for the conduct of the Buddhist priesthood under their control, and there is the corresponding and still more elaborate system of administration under Chinese authority in Tibet. Similarly the head of the Taoist faith, described as the Heavenly Master, has official

recognition and authority, and under him are inferior officials to whose care are committed certain state temples devoted to the worship of the powers of nature. It is a singular illustration of the more than eclectic temperament of the Chinese mind that not only are these two religions tolerated, but that each of them enjoys an elaborate system of official establishment throughout the Empire, whilst at the same time there is theoretically an unwavering adherence to the Confucian view which condemns Buddhism and Taoism alike as dangerous and hurtful superstitions.

It may be convenient here to refer to a singular document which illustrates the Chinese official view of these two systems. It contains sixteen brief maxims, which were issued by the famous Emperor Khang-hi (1662-1723 A.D.) for the instruction of his people in the fundamental principles of social morality and economics. After inculcating attention to filial piety and family ties, local harmony, industrious husbandry and thrift, with careful education, he touches on the subject of religion in these terms :—" Degrade strange religions in order to exalt the true doctrine."

The true doctrine is, of course, the Confucian system, while the strange religions are three in number—Buddhism, Taoism, and Christianity ; the latter known at that date only from the teaching of the Roman Catholic missionaries.

The next Emperor composed (in 1724 A.D.) an amplification of these maxims, and later still a high official prepared an elaborate paraphrase of the whole in popular language, in order to adapt them to the instruction of the common people. This is how he deals with the " true doctrine " and the " strange religions." He says : " What are the correct sects in the Empire? There are only the five classics and the four books handed down from the sacred sages. These all contain the orthodox doctrine ; everyone should diligently read them. . . . From of old

to the present time three sects have been handed down. Besides the sect of the learned there is that of the priests of Buddha, and that of the Taoist doctors. The whole talk of the priests is about becoming demi-gods, and equal to Buddha, their founder. When a son leaves his family and becomes a priest, they say that the nine gradations of his kindred are all sure of ascending to heaven. Now, consider a little. Where is Buddha? What is Buddha? Buddha is the heart. What is it to meditate on the essence of Buddha? It is to give the attention every hour and instant to the government of the heart. If your heart be good it is Buddha. Hence the first of the books of their sect is called a heart classic. The sum of what this heart classic says is that the heart must be straight, not zig-zag; true, not hypocritical; vigorous, not moping. Covetousness, anger and immoderate desire—these three evils must all be rooted up. . . . Therefore Chu Tsze of the Sung dynasty says, 'The sect of Buddha regard not heaven and earth, or anything within the four quarters, but attend only to the heart.' This sentence contains a complete summary of the original doctrines of the sect of Buddha. As to the sect of Tao, what they chiefly insist on is the law of renovation, by which they talk of solidifying quicksilver; converting lead (into gold); calling for grumbling dragons and roaring tigers; forming internal and external pills, and I know not what else. They have no further object than that of nourishing well the animal spirits, and of lengthening out life for a few years; that is all. Chu Tsze says, 'What the sect of Tao chiefly attend to is the preservation of the breath of life.' . . . You simple people know not how to discriminate, for even according to what the books of Buddha say, he was the first-born son of the King Fan, but rejecting the world, he fled away alone to the top of the snowy mountains in order to cultivate virtue. If he regarded not his own father and mother, wife and children, are you such fools

as to suppose that he regards the multitude of the living, or would deliver his laws and doctrine to you? If he rejected the imperial residence, the palace of queens, the dragon's chamber, and the halls ornamented with the picture of the king of birds, is it not marvellous to suppose that he should delight in nunneries, monasteries, temples, and religious houses which you can build for him? As to the Emperor of Gems, the most honourable in heaven, of whom the sect of Tao speak, if there be indeed such a god, it is strange to think that he should not enjoy himself at his own ease in the high heaven, but must have you to give him a body of molten gold, and build him a house to dwell in. . . . Moreover you say that your serving Buddha is a very profitable service; that if you burn paper money, present offerings, and keep feasts before the face of your god Buddha, he will dissipate calamities, blot out your sins, increase your happiness, and prolong your age. Now reflect. From of old it has been said the gods are intelligent and just. Were Buddha a god of this description, how could he avariciously desire your gilt paper and your offerings to encourage him to afford you protection? If you do not burn gilt paper to him and spread offerings on his altar, the god Buddha will be displeased with you, and send down judgments on you! Then your god Buddha is a scoundrel! Let us take for example your District Officer. Though you never go to compliment and flatter him, yet, if you be good people and attend to your duty, he will pay a marked attention to you. But if you transgress the law, commit violence, and usurp the rights of others, if you should use a thousand ways and means to flatter him he still will be displeased with you, and will without fail remove the pests from society. You say that your worshipping Buddha atones for your sins, but suppose that you have broken the law in some particular, and are brought to the judgment hall to be punished, if you should with a loud

voice call out for a thousand times 'Your excellency, your excellency,' do you think the magistrate would spare you?"

This drastic polemic against idolatry is not confined to the pages of an old book. It is by law read and commented on in turn with the other fifteen maxims on the first and fifteenth days of every month, by the local magistrates or their deputies in every part of the Empire. So far therefore as Christianity is hostile to idolatry, we have the highest official sanction for setting forth this aspect of it. No wise missionary would allow himself the harshness of the official criticism of the popular faith, but with discretion and courtesy a missionary can in China use a good deal of freedom in speaking of idolatry, since it is well known to all that the greatest traditions of Chinese history, and the highest native authority, is of one mind with us in all this department of religious discussion.

The two systems of idol-worship are less formidable antagonists to the truth than Confucianism. It would be wrong to say that they have not a strong hold on the minds of the people. But they hold them by their fears, and when these fears are defied by a few, and it is seen that the burdensome yoke of superstition can be thrown off without hurt, the power of idolatry begins to crumble.

Confucianism, on the contrary, holds men through their moral sense. Its ancestral worship appeals in theory to their best feelings, and its ethical standard is high enough to answer the demand of the common conscience. Confucianism is the most powerful element in national life, and it maintains its hold with singular persistency, even on the minds of the most intelligent Christians. Notwithstanding its high pretensions, it is too apparent that the moral life is gone out of it. We would fain welcome it as an ally, but are driven to regard it as our most formidable foe. It is the dead hand whose grasp must be loosed before China can go free, to carry her regenerated powers into the service of God in Christ.

LECTURE V

THE SWATOW MISSION FIELD: PHYSICAL FEATURES AND INDUSTRIAL LIFE

IN the sketch which I have given you of primitive life in China is to be found the clue to the social life and customs of the present day. Passing from the wide field of China as a whole, I will try to put before you one district, which may be taken as a specimen of modern China as a field for mission work.

The field of the Swatow Mission lies along the sea coast for a distance of about 150 miles, between the meridians of longitude 115 and 117. It forms the most easterly portion of the rich and populous province of Canton. It may be divided broadly into two great regions, the one consisting of fertile plains formed by the rivers, and the other of the mountain districts by which these river courses are separated. The plains are occupied by people speaking one dialect or language which is called Hok-lo; the mountain districts by another race of Chinese, speaking a different dialect which is called Hak-ka. Two great river systems meet at the town of Swatow, which is the centre of the Swatow mission field. One of these rivers flows almost directly south from the mountains around the important city of Ting-chow-fu, and reaches the sea after a course of about 200 miles. For three-fourths of its course it winds among the hills which are occupied by the Hak-ka speaking populace, and where it emerges upon the plains it waters the fertile soil which is occupied by the Hok-lo people. It passes by the walls of the great city of Chao-

chow-foo, which contains a population of some two hundred thousand souls. Immediately below the city the river divides into a series of channels diverging from each other, which, by the soil which they have brought down in the course of centuries, have gradually built up the fertile delta, which forms one large and important part of the Swatow mission field. Two other rivers rise from the mountains to the north-west and the west of Swatow, and flow, one in a south-easterly and the other in an easterly direction, washing on either side the walls of the district city of Kieh-yang. They unite some miles to the east of the city, and pour their united stream into a wide tidal estuary, on whose northern bank the town of Swatow is situated. Further to the south another river runs from west to east, and reaches the sea through another somewhat smaller estuary. Beyond these are minor streams which fall into the sea at various points on the coast between Swatow and the British colony of Hong-Kong. All these rivers water extensive plains of fertile soil which support a very large and industrious population.

Besides these principal rivers, the whole country is intersected by a system of smaller streams and artificial canals. These are used both for purposes of transport and for irrigation, and an immense amount of labour has been expended in digging the channels and banking them in for the protection of the fields, which are often on a lower level than the rivers themselves. The whole district is called by the descriptive name Chao-chow, locally pronounced Tie-chiu, which means "the tidal department." This name points to the fact that the fall of the rivers which pass through the district is very slight, and that tides make themselves felt in some directions to a distance of thirty or forty miles from the sea. In some cases channels have been cut parallel with the rivers, opening into them at their upper end and closed at the lower, so as to admit the fresh water from

A TIGER TRAP

the river and exclude the salt tidal waters, for the purposes of irrigation. The district has a coast line of over two hundred miles, and there is no part of it more than fifty miles from the sea. Behind it lies the Hak-ka country. The line of demarcation runs, for the most part, parallel to the coast from S.W. to N.E., but is broken by spurs of the lower hills which run out towards the sea. It follows the contour of the mountains which rise abruptly from the cultivated plains, and recede to a tableland from fifteen hundred to two thousand feet above the level of the sea. These two districts of country, the Hok-lo or coast district, and the Hak-ka or hill district, present very distinct physical characteristics, and the people who occupy them differ greatly in their character and habits. A comparison of the two districts shows with remarkable vividness how population and cultivable areas go together. The ancient process of settlement which was gone through by the ancestors of the Chinese people along the banks of the Yellow River, and later on the Yang-tse-kiang, has evidently been repeated on a smaller scale in the gradual occupation of the Swatow district by the people who now inhabit it. In the Hak-ka country, population is thinly scattered in small hamlets among the hills. There are very few large towns, and even villages of considerable size are not numerous. Whatever little strips of cultivable land are to be found in valleys among the mountains, small hamlets are planted, with sometimes not more than eighty or one hundred inhabitants, and rarely more than one or two thousand. In the low lying district of the Hok-lo country, on the other hand, the population is exceedingly dense. There are three classes of centres of population, which are distinguished by the names given to them by the Chinese, names which correspond, more or less, to our cities, towns, and villages. The cities are surrounded by high walls, and are the seats of the local

magistrates. There are ten of these principal cities in the Hok-lo country, some of them having as many as two hundred thousand or two hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, and some not more than forty or fifty thousand. These large cities are generally planted on the banks of the rivers or at other important points which have for natural reasons become commercial centres. Chao-chow-foo, the principal city of the whole district, may be taken as an example. It stands on the right bank of the north river at a distance of about twenty-one miles north of the seaport town of Swatow. It is surrounded by a castellated wall thirty to forty feet in height and twenty feet in thickness. There are four principal gates named from the four points of the compass, and over each is a three-storied tower which is occupied by a military guard. Two main streets run through the city, one from the north gate to the south, another from the east gate to the west. The area within the walls is closely built upon, and very little open ground is left. The principal exception is within the precincts of the official residence of the governor, called the Tao-tai, where there is a large park with ornamental ponds and timber trees. But even where the city is densely built, banyans and other trees rise from the courtyards of the houses, and agreeably break the monotonous expanse of house roofs which stretch as far as the eye can see. Outside the city walls there are large suburbs, especially to the south and west. Within the north gate rises a considerable hill, which is laid out in ornamental gardens with a number of public buildings, some of which are temples, while others are occupied by a public library and official reception rooms. At the east gate a bridge, nearly half a mile in length, spans the river, and connects the city with a large suburb on the opposite bank. On either side of the river the bridge consists of enormous blocks of granite from thirty to forty feet in length, and

from seven to five feet in breadth and thickness, resting on great piers built of stone. In the centre, where the current runs most strongly, is a bridge of boats, fastened by an iron chain, which connects the piers thrown out from either side. The principal streets of the city and the stone piers of the bridge are densely lined by shops. The chief street, which connects the north and south gates of the city, is paved with slabs of stone, and arched over through a great part of its length with ornamental carved arches, inscribed with complimentary inscriptions in honour of former distinguished inhabitants. On either side of the street are the shops of shoemakers, silk merchants, apothecaries and booksellers, while the pavement is freely encroached upon by the little tables and booths of fortune-tellers, seal cutters, letter writers, sellers of plasters and quack medicines, and dealers in old iron and curios. The streets are thronged by continual tides of people passing to and fro, both natives of the city—usually distinguishable by their better dress—and the country people who have brought in their products for sale, or are buying and carrying away the wares of the city shopkeepers.

In the city are the official residences of the magistrates of the city itself and of the surrounding district. Chief of these is the Tao-tai, who is next in rank to the governor of a whole province. The Tao-tai of Chao-chow-foo governs three departments, Chao-chow, Kia-ying-chow and Hwei-chow. For all purposes of civil government he is master of eleven millions of people. He collects revenue, administers criminal law, and reviews and controls the action of a large number of subordinate officials. He is himself a civil officer, usually of high literary rank, and takes precedence of, and to a certain extent controls, all military officials within the departments which he governs. Next in rank to him among the civil officers comes the Fu, or the Prefect, whose jurisdiction is con-

fined to the department of Chao-chow alone. Under the Fu is the Hien, or District Magistrate, who governs one of the nine districts into which the prefecture of Chao-chow is divided. Each of these three civil officers has his official residence within the walls of the city, with public halls in which he administers a substitute for justice, and rows of smaller houses which are occupied by secretaries, clerks, guards and police. Besides these principal officials, there are various officers of lower rank who assist in the administering of ordinary business, besides expectants of office not yet appointed to permanent posts, who are sent as deputies for the settlement of particular cases. There are also military officials of various ranks, the highest of whom is the Tin-tai, or Colonel, and they are required to co-operate with the civil authorities in the preservation of order in case of need.

This city, Chao-chow-foo, is the principal seat of the government, and perhaps the largest city of the whole district, but the other district cities, in which are the official residences of district magistrates, present much the same characteristics, though on a smaller scale. But it is essential to the Chinese idea of a city that it be surrounded by a wall with gates that are closed at nightfall, and it is always the residence of civil and military officials, and supposed to be capable of military defence. There is another class of towns which have not the same political standing, but some of which are of hardly less importance both as centres of population and as centres of trade, and in them is collected much of the busiest life of the district. The great bulk of the people live in what are called villages, but the word "village" as used in English is hardly a fitting description of the places that are so described. Many of these so-called villages are considerable towns, with populations of ten or fifteen thousand inhabitants. In some of them markets are held

on fixed days, which attract large numbers of people from the surrounding country. It is an interesting sight to see the streams of population entering and leaving these market towns on the mornings and evenings of market days. In the morning you can see long streams of people carrying all the varied products of the surrounding country into market. Rice, potatoes, sugar cane, cut bamboos, baskets and other wares made out of bamboo, with buffaloes, pigs, and fowls, are all brought in in immense numbers; and in the evening you see the same goods, after redistribution in the market-place, being taken away in other directions to adjust the supply to the demand of the scattered villages. The scenes in the busy market-place often present a condensed picture of the whole social life and industry of the surrounding country.

As the wall is as essential to the Chinese conception of a city, so it is essential to their idea of a village that it should comprise a stretch of cultivable land. What we should call the village itself may consist only of a few small dwelling-houses, with or without a surrounding wall; or it may consist of a considerable town, with many streets and lanes, and a dense population; but in either case it must possess its stretch of fields in the neighbourhood, of greater or less area according to the numbers of the population and their wealth. From any of the hill-tops on the borders of the great plains of Tie-chiu, these cultivated lands may be seen stretching into the distance for many miles. In summer they are thickly covered with the fresh green of the rice fields, while near the time of the two harvests they turn yellow, and present much the same aspect as fields of ripe wheat. In either case they give a strong impression of great fertility and beauty. The laying out of the rice lands is the result of many generations of very careful and laborious work. None of the fields are of large extent, because every part

of the whole area must be perfectly level. The fields are separated by little earthen boundaries, often not more than six inches wide, and the levels of the different fields are so adjusted that the water for irrigation runs in succession from one to another often for a distance of several miles. This affords room for much engineering skill of a primitive kind, and requires also careful adjustment of the respective rights of the owners of these fields. The seed is sown under water in small plots which are carefully watched and manured until the plants are six inches or eight inches in height. Meanwhile the whole area to be planted has been carefully ploughed and kept under water for many days. When the plants are ready for planting out, men, women, and children join in lifting them, carrying them to the fields, and setting them out in little tufts in regular lines about a foot apart. From that time the plants must be kept flooded with water until the grain begins to ripen. An important part of the culture consists in regulating the flow of water from day to day, so as to maintain it at a nearly constant level. When natural streams are not available for the purpose, this must be done by artificial means. A wooden chain pump is very frequently used to draw water from the rivers and raise it to the level of the fields upon the banks. It consists of a long wooden trough, with a chain of paddles fitted inside passing round an axle at each end. The upper axle has projecting footholds which are trodden by the feet of two or three men, and the continual revolution of the paddles brings up a steady stream of water. In times of drought the creaking of these pumps may be heard night and day far and wide over the country, testifying to an enormous amount of laborious toil. When the grain is nearly ripe the water is run off, and the ground allowed to become nearly dry. When harvest time arrives the crop is cut with sickles not unlike our own, but the grain, instead of being stacked for threshing

is threshed upon the spot. Large tubs with high sides are placed in the fields; a small ladder is placed within, leaning against the side, and the reaper, holding a bunch of straw in his hands, beats the ears against the ladder, so that the grain falls into the bottom of the tub. It is then carried home in baskets to be dried and winnowed at leisure.

Throughout all parts of the Tie-chiu district, rice is the main crop and yields two harvests annually, one in summer, the other in winter. It is grown not only in the great plains in the neighbourhood of the principal rivers, but its cultivation is even carried into little glens among the hills, where it would seem impossible to practise a culture that requires a level surface. The hillsides are carefully terraced, sometimes as many as two hundred terraces rising one above the other in one connected series. By the sea coast new strips of marshy soil are gradually added from time to time to the rice-bearing plains. They are enclosed by high clay dikes to keep out the sea, and for the first few years after enclosure special varieties of a coarse rice which can grow in brackish water are cultivated, until the quality of the land gradually improves with long cultivation, and finer sorts can be grown.

Alongside of the rice fields and specially on any rising grounds, or near the foot of the hills, large quantities of sugar cane are grown. This requires comparatively little care in cultivation. Canes are cut into short lengths, and the joints are steeped in water until young shoots begin to show, and the cuttings are then planted in long rows. By the end of the year the plants attain a height of from 10 to 15 feet, and when cut down for crushing, the roots are left to produce a second crop in the following year. The second year's crop is heavier than the first, but in the third year the canes become smaller and yield less freely; the roots are then dug up to be used as fuel, and

the ground is planted anew. A characteristic feature of the landscape during the sugar harvest in winter is the large conical mat shed, numbers of which are erected over the country among the sugar fields; in these the crushing of the cane and boiling of the juice are carried on. The men of each village club together to erect and work these sugar factories, supplying the stone crushing-rollers from their common capital, and each contributes his share of work, as well as the services of his own buffalo.

The culture of rice and of sugar are the two principal sources of wealth in the Tie-chiu district, but there are also large areas of ground devoted to the cultivation of the sweet potato for immediate use. It is not a favourite food, but is largely used by the poorer classes as a substitute in whole or in part for rice. In some cases it is cut into slices and dried for the manufacture of potato starch. In still poorer districts of the country, where none of the more profitable crops can be reared, the cultivators fall back on the humble earth-nut, of which large quantities are grown even in poor soils. The so-called nuts are produced underground, and when dug up, dried and crushed, yield a large proportion of a coarse oil which is used for lighting, and to some extent as food. Besides these principal cultures a large variety of other plants are grown, such as indigo, tapioca, hemp, tobacco, turnips, cabbages, yams, millet, and maize; but in every district, whatever the capacity of the soil may be, the most is made of every portion of it, and the crops are carefully adjusted to the nature of the local soil. As one passes through the country one sees everywhere how much can be done by the painstaking industry of a large but poor population, whose ground is sub-divided into very small sections and receives everywhere the minutest care.

The smaller villages are usually occupied by people belonging to one clan, or of the same surname. In the larger villages it frequently happens that different sections

CHINESE INDUSTRIES: SUGAR CRUSHING

of the village belong to different clans. But the whole social fabric and the ownership of cultivated lands is based upon the continued close association of relatives descended from a common ancestor. Almost every farmer, however poor, possesses at least some little plots of ground of his own. The father of a family in anticipation of his death divides his land among his sons, who may afterwards continue to cultivate the whole in common, or who may part company, each cultivating his own share. There are no doubt natural checks to this continuous subdivision of holdings in land, but the individual plots, partly as a result of this process and partly for convenience in the work of irrigation, are usually very small. Besides, the ground cultivated by one family is often very widely scattered, and may consist of ten or twenty patches having no connection with each other, and separated by lands which belong to other members of the village. Besides the land which is their own property many of the cultivators also rent fields belonging to others. Theoretically the emperor is the over-lord of all the soil, and an annual field rent is collected by the mandarins as an important part of the Imperial revenue.

When one sees how carefully and continuously cultivation is carried on, it might be supposed that the soil would long ere this have become exhausted, but the Chinese cultivators are fully alive to the necessity of returning to the soil the elements which have been removed from it by the production of crops. For this purpose all natural manures are largely used. Straw, stubble, and roots, which cannot be used for other purposes are burned and the ashes returned to the land. There is besides a large importation of bean-cake from the north of China, which forms a rich fertiliser both for the rice and for the sugar crops. This bean-cake consists of the compressed pulp of beans from which oil has been extracted. It is a costly item in the expenditure of poor cultivators.

Apart from agriculture, there are almost no industries in the inland districts. Weaving is extensively practised, but nowhere on a large scale. It is chiefly carried on by the women in their homes, and the cloth woven is carried for sale to local markets. On the sea coast, on the other hand, large numbers of fishermen find employment in gathering the harvest of the sea. Fresh fish must, for lack of means of rapid carriage, be consumed for the most part on the spot, but large quantities are salted, and sometimes dried, both for transportation to inland districts, and to a less extent, for export abroad. It is another illustration of the minute care which the Chinese have applied to the development of the means of living, that, even in inland districts, a good deal of comfort is added to the living of the people by the artificial cultivation of fresh-water fish in fish ponds. The young fry are bought or reared for the purpose, let loose in large ponds on the outskirts of the village, and carefully fed throughout the year. At certain times, and especially before festivals and holidays, and most of all shortly before the Chinese New Year, these fish are caught and sold, or used in the village feasts.

The impression of industry created by the field work in the country is confirmed in entering the villages. Most of the homes are very poor, and large numbers of the population live in houses of a single room. These rooms invariably consist of three unbroken walls, the only opening being the door in front. Two beds occupy the inner corners of the room. One of the outer corners is filled by a brick or earthen cooking stove. The remaining corner is often enclosed by a large mat of bamboo splints, set upon its edge and curved into a circle. It thus becomes a receptacle for the stock of rice which is to be the family's main subsistence throughout the year. A table and two or three wooden stools complete the furniture of the room, while the remaining space is filled up with indescribable accumulations of all kinds of rubbish.

or used as sleeping room and hunting ground by fowls and pigs. Many of the people, however, especially in the more thinly peopled districts, occupy houses of a somewhat better type; but speaking generally, one might say that all better class Chinese houses, however large, are based in plan upon the repetition, on various scales of size and elegance, of one unit: that is to say, the typical Chinese cottage, which consists of three rooms side by side under one roof. The central room is either entirely open to the front, or is closed only by folding doors, which are thrown open in the daytime. On either side of it, and opening off it, is a smaller room, often without any window, which forms a bedroom. Sometimes there are projecting wings, used as kitchens or living rooms, and the largest and finest houses consist of little else than a multiplication of these elements. The outside of a Chinese house, as the outside of a village, presents usually the appearance of a dead wall. Windows in the outer walls are avoided, partly through fear of thieves and partly for superstitious reasons. It is said that good luck enters by the front door, and that the opening of windows in the rear walls allows it to escape. What windows there are contain no glass, and are closed by wooden bars, with sometimes a wooden shutter added to exclude rain and wind. In better houses the windows are sometimes made of oyster shells ground into thin layers, placed together in wooden frames. During one's early years in China one is inclined to wonder where the rich people live. Rich men do not usually desire to display their wealth, and whether from parsimony or from fear of extortion they usually live in a style that hardly marks them out from their poorer neighbours. Of course there are exceptions to this rule, and every considerable town has its larger houses, sometimes with gardens attached to them, which are the residences of the richer members of society.

To sum up briefly the social condition of the people, one might say that there is little extreme and abject poverty such as we have in our large cities at home; but a very large proportion of society consists of a class of poor people amongst whom comparatively little money is in use. They have enough to live upon in good years, but they have little or nothing laid by against sickness or bad harvests. In case of need they must borrow, and borrow at ruinous rates of interest. The family system on which Chinese society is built tends to keep all on a somewhat uniform level. Each member of the family earns for all, not for himself, and this tends to prevent individuals either from frequently becoming rich, or on the other hand, from falling very low in the social scale. At the same time one is often surprised to find that in poor looking villages there is a great deal more wealth in the hands of the people than one would have supposed.

With regard to education, you will often read that the Chinese as a whole are an educated people, that there is a school in every village, and that everyone is taught to read. Statements of this kind greatly exaggerate the actual condition of affairs. It is true that in many poor villages small schools will be found, but there are very many in which there is none. The whole school system is left entirely to private enterprise. Usually when it is desired to open a school someone undertakes to act as patron. He invites parents to give in the names of children whom they will send to school, and for whom they will pay a small amount of school fees. He then arranges with a professional teacher to come and live in the village on a small salary, which the patron himself must often make up to the bare minimum. Besides the promised salary and fees, which often amount to not more than £3 to £4 per annum, the teacher receives presents of food and fuel from his pupils, and may often add to his income by acting as letter-

writer for the village, by telling fortunes, by writing ornamental scrolls with which the Chinese delight to adorn their houses, and if he has ability for it, by writing petitions or complaints for presentation to the mandarins in lawsuits. In the better schools the teachers are often men of some ability, though from our point of view their education is of the narrowest. But the village schoolmaster, especially in poor districts, is often extremely ignorant and inefficient, even when estimated by the lowest standard. There is no system of examination. Most of the parents are too ignorant and too indifferent to test the schoolmaster's work, and the patron himself is often a man of but limited education. Even a good teacher has many difficulties to contend with. The boys, for there are no girls in these schools, either sleep in the school or come in the daytime and go home at night, but in either case they are very often kept from school by their parents to help in farm work, or picking up fuel, or in tending the buffaloes. The school books consist only of one or two small volumes of easy rhymes for beginners, and the great classical books which are the foundation of Chinese literature. The child is thus confronted at the outset with philosophical and moral ideas which are utterly beyond his comprehension, and indeed the teacher usually makes no effort to explain their meaning to his pupils. I have examined a boy who had been ten years in a non-Christian Chinese school, and found that while he could repeat by memory with fair accuracy considerable portions of the classical books, he could not give me in his own vernacular the meaning of the simplest sentence. Here and there are found more advanced schools where a scholar who has taken a degree acts as teacher, and is looked up to by the country round with great respect. His course of teaching consists chiefly of the correction of essays and compositions which his pupils write upon themes drawn from the classical books, in the

style of those which are required for competition in the Civil Service Examinations.

These examinations represent the sole stimulus applied by Government to the furtherance of education. In every District City young men of promise who have taken up literary study as a profession may present themselves for examination every year. The successful candidates have their names entered in the books of the district, and may in turn present themselves for a higher examination with a view to gaining the first degree. This degree, which is described as "cultivated ability," does not confer any official standing or post, but it is a much coveted honour. These graduates present themselves yearly at the Prefectural cities of their native district, partly with a view to the retention of their degree, which may be lost by non-attendance, and partly for competitions before an Imperial Commissioner for the degree next higher in rank, that of "elevated men." Graduates who reach this position may be regarded as having their foot on the ladder of official promotion. They may have to wait long for an appointment, and when it is found they must pay heavily for the enjoyment of it, but when they have once "entered the tide," as the Chinese say, the highest positions in the State are open to those who have either abilities, wealth or social influence sufficient to carry them forward. Of these three conditions of success, wealth is, unhappily, by far the most influential.

Throughout the whole Empire this system of graded examinations is carried on, and the theory is that by means of it a constant succession of men of ability is drawn from among the common people to fill positions of trust in the service of the Empire. Unfortunately, theory and practice are widely apart. It is a frequent complaint of literary men that degrees are sold by the presiding mandarins before they enter the hall of competition. The area of subjects covered by these examinations

is very limited, but within those limits the struggle is extremely keen. For example, in each provincial city, at examinations which are held in two years out of three, there may be as many as fifteen or twenty thousand candidates drawn from all parts of the province. For all these there may be less than one hundred degrees to be bestowed. The examination is divided into three bouts, each of which lasts, as the Chinese say, "for three days"; that is to say, candidates enter the examination hall at sundown on one day and are secluded there until sunrise on the morning of the third day. After a few days' interval they enter again for another similar period, and after a second interval for a third. After undergoing the severe strain of these three examinations they may also enter for various supplementary competitions. At every such examination some of the students die in the examination hall under the severity of the mental and physical strain. Each man is allowed to carry in a small basket of food on entering, and there are cooks supplied by the officials, who cook for the candidates and the examiners in charge, but during the days of competition no intercourse is allowed with the outside world. The severity of these examinations gives rise to many superstitious stories. It is firmly believed that the examination halls are haunted by malignant demons; and it is said that if a bad man enters the hall, when he attempts to write his essay he is taken possession of by one of these demons, who first compels him to write out a confession of his crimes, and then puts him to death. But this story lies open to doubt. If it were true, deaths under examination would be more numerous than they are.

Education is said to be more advanced among the Hak-kas than among the Hok-los. One reason for this is that in the Hok-lo country the women, who by a strange custom of old standing habitually bind and crush their feet, take no part in field work. They may totter on

their crushed feet to the side of the village pond, or to a river flowing near by, to wash their clothes, and often help in turning over the grain that is being dried at their doors, but they very seldom go any distance from their homes. In the Hak-ka country, on the other hand, this custom hardly exists, and the women take a large part in field work. They even go up to the mountains to cut grass and sticks for fuel, and carry down heavy burdens upon their backs. The men, of course, share in the field work, but in a Hak-ka village you may often see a number of men idling about, clothed in long blue calico robes, and smoking long pipes, while the bulk of the hard work is done by the women. At the same time the Hak-kas are an energetic though turbulent race, and in the Canton province they have, from the time of the Tai-ping rebellion to the present day, been the leaders in most revolutionary movements.

In the large towns, especially on the principal trade routes or on the sea coast, there is a large mercantile class. They are men of wider outlook than the farmers of the country, and although not educated like the professed literary class, they are often men of far greater mental vigour and intelligence. They are extremely competent men of business, well able to carry out the largest undertakings. The European merchants at the open ports find them formidable competitors. They have unwearied patience for details, and a quick eye to small profits, while, when occasion calls for it, they can act generously, and deal on the most liberal scale. The purchase and sale of rice is one of the most profitable kinds of business, and shops and warehouses for the sale of cloth, shoes and other manufactured articles, as well as a vast variety of medicines of the Chinese pharmacopœia, occupy the principal streets of the towns. Many merchants from the Swatow district go abroad to push their business, and are among the most successful merchants in distant ports in

China, such as Tien-tsin and New-chwang, as well as in Singapore and the Straits Settlements.

I cannot put before you with any fulness the complex social life of the Chinese people, but from this slight sketch you will be able to picture to yourselves a hard-working, industrious and skilful people, who have made no little progress in all the more essential arts of life, and have been able to build up, over the wide territory which they occupy, a vast social fabric. We wonder at their exclusiveness, and the little desire they have shown for intercourse with other countries, but we are apt to forget that China, stretching from regions of almost Arctic cold far down into the Tropics, and from the shores of the Pacific west to the great table-lands of Central Asia, presents such a variety of wealth, and natural possessions and products, as to render its people almost independent of the outside world. It is no wonder that they were not at once prepared to believe that they had much to learn from the despised foreigners who, during the present century, have been breaking through the barriers of their exclusiveness.

The first experience which the Chinese had of foreign intercourse on an extended scale was in connection with the opium trade, and they had only too good reason to dread the advent of foreigners bringing gifts which were destined, and, as they supposed, intended to work desolation among their people. Of course they were wrong in the arrogant methods which they took to repel their unwelcome visitors. But they were not wrong in the inference which they drew, that to some of the foreign merchants who came to their shores, supported by their Government, gain was more than righteousness. It is under that disgraceful stigma that we approach them, to preach to them the Gospel of purity, justice and peace, and it is no wonder if our attitude is to them hard to comprehend.

I have now given a slight sketch of the Chinese people —their religion and literature, their industry and manners. But it is impossible to convey in words the sharp impression which is made upon one's mind by one's first day among them. It is deepened by the experience of after years, but can never be effaced.

Imagine yourself, then, in presence of this great consolidated mass of human life, with its ancient civilisation, philosophy and religion for background, and its intense and varied activity surging around you. Suppose yourself to have in some way acquired their language, and found your way among these millions of intelligent, industrious, prejudiced and superstitious, but not unfriendly souls. How shall you gain their ear and reach their minds? How shall you commend to them the Gospel of Jesus Christ? How shall you give them the spiritual insight and the moral courage to break off from their environment and at all risks follow Him?

That is the first problem which faces the missionary on the threshold of his work.

LECTURE VI

THE FIRST STAGE OF MISSION WORK: EVANGELISTIC PREACHING

If you have followed with attention the outline of the religious condition of the Chinese people which I have put before you, you must feel how incomplete and unsatisfactory it has been. A few facts have been given and a few thoughts suggested, but you must still feel that I have left many great questions untouched, and have not been able to give a systematised account or rational explanation of the religious rites and observances of the people. Of this I am fully aware, and can only plead, on the one hand, that the subject is too large to be covered by anyone's observations, and, still more, is too large for the narrow limits of these lectures. On the other hand, I may claim that the more mixed and confused the impressions I have given you are, the more truly do they reflect the actual condition of things. Popular religion in China is a confused mingling of unreconciled if not irreconcilable creeds, rites, and superstitions, with a few great and worthy foundation thoughts in religion and ethics which underlie the whole. But these thoughts do not underlie the popular religion as its controlling and justifying ideas. They lie there rather like the buried foundation stones which testify to the former glory of some great city, but which have long been hidden from view by the accumulated debris of brick and mud which later centuries have heaped upon them.

The missionary who goes among the Chinese people hoping to find the nearly pure monotheism and austere

morality of Confucianism, the gentleness and self-scrutiny of Buddhism, or the metaphysical superiority and contempt of the world of Taoism, inspiring the religion and elevating the thoughts of the people around him, is doomed to many disappointments.

You go to a District City and ask for the Confucian temple. Its wide courts and the distinctive red colour of its walls give it a certain aspect of grandeur, and you hope to see there Chinese religion at its best. You find on the doorsteps some boys drying rice and garlic or bunches of incense sticks, and the doors are locked. Someone is at last persuaded to find the door-keeper, and a small gratuity induces him to open the doors. The tablet of Confucius stands in the great hall, and those of his disciples are duly ranged in the side buildings, as you have read in books, but there are no worshippers. The temple is in disrepair; the grass grows green in the courts; the bats occupy the great halls, and you are glad to escape from the fetid odours of the place.

You inquire for a Buddhist temple, and are taken to the Khai-ngam Ji. You pass two hideous plaster figures which guard the outer doorway. You thread your way through a crowd of fortune-tellers, sellers of quack medicines, professional beggars, idlers, and itinerant sellers of cooked rice, sausages, soups, and cooling drinks, and reach at last a side door to the main temple. You find yourself in a hall of imposing dimensions, with three great gilded images in the place of honour, and the eighteen Lo-han ranged on either side. On the table before the idols incense is burning. At one side hangs a great bronze bell. On the floor are small straw mats on which worshippers may kneel, but the worshippers are not there. The roof beams are hung with votive lanterns and other offerings. The pillars are inscribed with elegant sentences in praise of Buddha and his manifestations, or setting

forth that purity and sincerity of heart are the conditions of acceptable worship. You are touched, perhaps, by some noble words inscribed in large gilded letters on black lacquered boards—"The grace of Buddha shines afar," "Dwelling on high he hears the lowly,"—and you begin to hope for some sign of genuine religious life or emotion to reward your search. Just then the spell is broken. The priest shuffles up to you with sallow, sensual face, and offers tea. You accept the courtesy, and a subscription book is handed to you and he asks for an offering. You explain that you cannot offer for the temple worship, but will give him a gratuity for any trouble you may have caused. You take the opportunity to inquire about his gods and his beliefs, but the subject does not interest him, and his only point is to beg for a larger gratuity. All you can learn by inquiries about the meaning of the images and the worship offered to them is that he knows little and cares less, either about the founder of his religion, or about the great ideas of the Buddhist faith. One is glad to escape from the importunities of the priest and his colleagues, and to be out again among the beggars and the gamblers. There is no inspiration in the Khai-ngam Ji.

It is the same in the Taoist temples of the "City Guardian"; of Kwan Ti, the god of war; of Wen-chhang, the god of literature; and the same in the temple of Han Yü, the famous scholar of the ninth century, whose temple must be classed as Confucian, although the worship offered in it is essentially opposed to the teachings of Confucius. Formalism, neglect, and superstition are to be found in abundance, but religion nowhere.

One turns to the country, hoping to find more simplicity and possibly more earnestness. One has read somewhere the encouraging words of Sir Edwin Arnold: "Forests of flowers are daily laid upon his stainless shrines, and countless millions of lips daily repeat the

formula, 'I take refuge in Buddha,'" but when one turns from fancy to fact, what is the picture? What meets the eye in a village temple? A cobwebbed image and a tattered shrine in the care of an ignorant and idle priest. Here a filthy table, grimy with the ill-cleansed remains of many a bygone meal; there a half-finished idol, marred in the making and left to rot; a flower, but with no sweetness of spring showers nor glory of summer skies in it, only a withered stem stuck in the cold ashes that fill the incense pot in the inmost shrine—fit emblem of a heartless worship and a joyless faith. On the outer table before the idol reposes a half-starved cat, stretched listlessly on the larger incense vessel, its bed consisting of a few of the Buddhist tracts which, as an act of merit, are provided for free distribution by the more zealous and wealthy worshippers. These tracts, soiled by the incense and crushed in the cat's lair, strangely discredit the favourite Buddhist injunction, "Show reverential regard to the printed page."

Such is the aspect of Chinese religion as it shows itself to the explorer of the popular temples; but still one hopes that there may be special times of worship when the people are roused to more interest in their gods, and when one may see more active and stirring ceremonial. On a journey and passing near a village, one sometimes sees large numbers of people gathering from all quarters. All are dressed in their best, and hurry along the roads in family parties, men, women and children, laughing and talking as they go. Some carry baskets of food, and many of the women are carrying wooden stools. On inquiry, one finds that it is the birthday of some local idol, or that for some other local reason a special celebration is being held. On going into the village you find the open space in front of the principal temple occupied by a busy throng of people, but presently you discover that the temple is not the centre of interest, but a platform

erected opposite to it. The people are preparing for what is by far the most popular form of worship. They are giving a play in honour of the idol, and the platform is the stage, set up opposite to the temple so that the idol may view the performance. The people of the village and crowds of their friends from the country round about have gathered for the festival, which may last for two or three days. They stand or sit, packed closely together, through the long acts and the clamorous music of the play. During the day a great deal of rough amusement goes on, feasting, gambling and whisky drinking, with grosser orgies after nightfall, making these plays the one great amusement of the Chinese people; and here you have found at last their really popular religion.

Stage plays and processions in honour of the idols both afford amusement to old and young, and also supply a field of rivalry in display in which neighbouring villages carry on from year to year a keen competition. On these celebrations enormous sums of money are annually spent by people who have no other luxuries, and often can but barely provide the necessaries of life.

In short, popular religion in the sense of united worship is practically a thing unknown, and religion supplies nothing either to stimulate thought or to guide and strengthen morality. Now let me ask you to present to yourselves this problem. With such information as one can gather from Western books, and such vague impressions of Chinese religion as present themselves to the eye, how is the missionary to begin to address himself to the problem of bringing to these people some understanding of a new faith? Suppose yourself landing from a steamer at Swatow. You find yourself in a busy centre of trade, amid crowds of men who are busily loading and unloading the steamers which convey products to and from foreign markets or from distant Chinese ports. You pass further into the country and find everywhere the

busy, energetic multitudinous life which I have slightly sketched. Of course you may assume that the missionary's first task is to learn the language of the people; but suppose for the present that this has been to some extent done. How is he to put himself in touch with them? What ideas has he in common with them, and what elements of the Christian faith are most likely to reach their understandings or to touch their consciences? The problem now is not the same as it was when mission work in China was in its beginnings. Then foreigners were hardly known, or were known only to be hated and despised. It may give some idea of what the beginnings of mission work really are if I give you some account of the experiences of the first missionary in the Swatow district, and show how these prepared the way for the beginnings of our own mission.

Many centuries have gone by since Christianity in one form or another first reached Chinese soil. The Nestorians preached their own version of Christianity in China somewhere in the sixth century of the Christian era. The Roman Catholics, chiefly through the Jesuit Missions, began work in China in the sixteenth century. From the teaching of the latter a few words of Christian teaching have reached the ears of not a few of the Chinese, but Protestant missions in China began only in 1807, when the London Missionary Society sent Robert Morrison to Canton. In the Swatow district the first attempts at evangelisation were made by Rudolph Lechler, a missionary of the Basle Missionary Society, who, after fifty-two years of hard work in China, is still labouring among the stations of the German mission in the hill country of the Hak-kas in the district of Hin-ning.

On the 17th May 1848, accompanied by three Chinese helpers and a servant, Mr Lechler sailed from Hong-Kong. His first destination was the island of Namoa, lying off the sea coast in the Tie-chiu prefecture. Sailing in a north-

easterly direction they reached Namoa in six days, where they found two European vessels, engaged in smuggling cargoes of opium, anchored near the shore. Mr Lechler was provided with a letter of credit to the captain of one of these vessels, and was allowed to live on board the ship till he could find a lodging on the island.

In this way Mr Lechler found a strange resting-place from which to begin his evangelistic work. His native companions after a time found a lodging for him in a village on shore, but in a very short time the owner of his lodging was summoned before the authorities and commanded to see to it that Mr Lechler should leave at once. In another town he found a Chinaman whose acquaintance he had made in Hongkong, and who had been baptised there by another German missionary named Gutzlaff. But Mr Lechler found him still worshipping the god of war, and showing no trace of what he had learned of Christianity. His son was a leper who had accompanied his father on a visit to Hongkong, and had possessed himself of a New Testament and various Christian tracts. Mr Lechler found him still reading them, and recognised in him an upright inquiring soul. The father, however, would give the missionary no encouragement, and he was obliged to leave the island, though a year later he was privileged to baptise the leper lad.

For some weeks Mr Lechler moved about from place to place in the island. During that time he met another man who had been baptised in Hongkong by Dr Gutzlaff, but was now busily occupied in the opium trade. He confessed with shame that he had made a Christian profession and had been warned by Gutzlaff to give up his discreditable occupation. This, however, he had failed to do, but he was willing to assist Mr Lechler by all the means in his power. In his company the missionary sailed for the city of Chao-chow-foo. He found the country through which he passed in a boat on the river

very attractive. Townships of ten or twenty thousand inhabitants lay in the plain. The country was everywhere well cultivated, and after twelve hours spent in ascending the river they reached the Chinaman's home. Mr Lechler was clad in the Chinese dress, had the front part of his head shaved, and was wearing a cue. A pair of large spectacles concealed his blue eyes. Following his guide, Mr Lechler found himself quietly settled in his new home.

At two hours' distance from the city, in the market town of Tng-ou, Mr Lechler's Chinese friend prepared a room for him, and from time to time he visited his host's friends and gave them some instruction in Christian truth. After a time his Chinese teacher and one or two catechists who had left him ventured to return, and he began to pay visits to the neighbouring villages. One of his assistants had his home originally in the village of Thien-kang, and there also lived another of the nominal converts who had received some Christian teaching from Gutzlaff. Through the efforts of these two men a little company of eleven persons, farmers, tradesmen, fishermen, and literary men, began to gather together to read the Word of God and hear it explained. They visited Mr Lechler in Tng-ou, and he in consequence went to Thien-kang to make himself better acquainted with their character and motives. Very shortly after, Mr Lechler, feeling the difficulty of dealing alone with applicants for baptism, went to visit Hongkong and confer with his colleagues there. They agreed upon certain rules by which they were all to be guided in their several spheres of mission work. On Mr Lechler's return to Tie-chiu he found that one of the opium ship captains had got into difficulties with the Chinese authorities, in making an excursion up the river in his ship's boat. His Chinese boat's crew were seized and cast into prison, where they were kept for several years. This incident made it impossible for Mr Lechler to reside in Tng-ou or Thien-kang. After a few days' residence in

PILLARS OF THE CHURCH: PIRATE AND LEPER

the latter place he was obliged to leave it and again take refuge in Namoa, where he lived for three months. Early in the following year he found a new home in a house which he rented in the village of Iam-tsau or "Salt Pans." A wealthy man in the village had become an opium-smoker, and in consequence had gone through his property and ruined himself. One large house remained in the possession of the widow and her sons, and they let a portion of this to Mr Lechler. In one of these rooms Lechler began holding morning and evening worship with his own followers, and also conducted public worship on the Lord's Day. The widow and her sons were very kind to Lechler and those who were with him, and he was able to repay their kindness by some little attentions in providing medicines in time of sickness. His relations with the leading men of the village were friendly, and he was able to assist them in negotiating for peace with a neighbouring village with which they had been at feud. The people of the village could not understand what Lechler's object was in coming to live among them. They noticed that he did not attend their theatres or other places of pleasure, and they began to conclude that he was endeavouring to "become a holy man," and doing good works in the hope of meriting heaven. He gradually extended his preaching tours, and was surprised to find that wherever he went in the villages he could easily gather large audiences of attentive hearers. On one of these journeys he visited the Island of Namoa, and there baptised the leper whose acquaintance he had made on his first arrival there. He also visited Thien-kang, and there baptised five of those who had formerly sought baptism at his hands. In Iam-tsau itself some thirteen Chinese in all were baptised.

The assistants who accompanied Mr Lechler on those journeys had been provided for him by Dr Gutzlaff, but most of them proved to be men of most unsatisfactory character. Several left him, and others he was obliged

to dismiss. Other trying and disappointing experiences made Mr Lechler's residence in Iam-tsau a time of great grief, and he finally left it with the belief that little or nothing had been accomplished. He had prepared a manuscript dictionary which was afterwards of service to other missionaries, but some of the Christians of whom he had been most hopeful seem to have given up their Christian profession, and some had fallen back into heathenism. In February 1852, the Chinese authorities issued an order for his removal, and, although he himself was willing to take the risks of remaining, the people of the village were brought into great difficulties by his presence amongst them, and entreated him to leave.

After a short stoppage in Namoa he returned to Hongkong, and along with Mr Hamberg of the same mission, he arranged to begin work, from Hongkong as a centre, among the Hak-ka people. He had begun to make some progress in the new dialect when he received a message from Basel urging him to be strong in faith on the promise of God, and return to the little congregation at Iam-tsau, and resume his work there. He accordingly returned for a short time to the village of Iam-tsau, but found little to encourage him. He finally decided that it was his duty to leave and help Hamberg in pushing on the more hopeful work among the Hak-ka people.

During the five years of his residence among the Hok-lo Chinese he had visited about 200 of their villages preaching and teaching wherever he went. And so ended the first chapter of mission history in Tie-chiu.

I have given these experiences of Mr Lechler in some detail as an instance of what actually takes place in the earliest days of mission work. They also illustrate how openings are made, in the providence of God, for the entrance of the Gospel. Mr Lechler, in beginning work, was led by various circumstances of a very mixed kind. His first home was on board a ship engaged in illegally

smuggling opium. No missionary of course would choose to make his first appearance amongst a people whom he wished to gain in such a connection. Again, he was assisted by nominal Christians connected with Gutzlaff. Gutzlaff was himself an earnest and zealous Christian man, but greatly lacked discretion, and allowed himself to be too easily deceived by professing Christians. Living in Hongkong, he employed a number of native evangelists, whom he sent, as he believed, into various provinces of China to preach, and come back after long absences to report their experiences. On these occasions they often brought with them men whom they described as anxious inquirers from different parts of the Empire. Gutzlaff also sought by the help of these men to circulate the Scriptures, and when they came to him for instruction he often put into their hands considerable quantities of these books. Afterwards, however, when the work passed into the hands of Hamberg, he discovered that those so-called catechists were for the most part deceivers who had spent their time in the neighbourhood of Hongkong, employed about their own affairs; and, manufacturing reports for Gutzlaff, induced some of their friends to visit him along with them, and to be passed off as converts from distant regions. The books which were intrusted to them they sold to the printer, and the printer in turn re-sold them once more to Dr Gutzlaff. So Gutzlaff and the printer maintained between them a continuous "circulation" of the Scriptures.

The methods of work and its results were alike worthless, and yet some of those men who thus came in contact with Christianity were afterwards helpful to Mr Lechler in his better advised efforts. It is not a little remarkable that attempts so mistaken and unsatisfactory as those of Gutzlaff were yet serving some purpose in preparing the way for better work in later years. Here and there also Lechler met with individuals who had

already in some way gained some little knowledge of the truth, and were thereby prepared to listen to his message.

One is too apt to forget that God in His providence has many ways of reaching men, and that the missionary who begins work in even the newest fields may find that in unthought-of ways some preparation has already been made for him.

Evangelistic work has been carried on in different parts of China by very different methods. In some of the large cities, such as Canton, Hankow and Pekin, Chinese houses or shops have been rented on some of the principal streets, and thrown open as preaching halls by natives and foreigners. The Gospel has been preached in such places day after day for years and decades, and though often there has been little visible result, some knowledge of the gospel has in this way been spread far and wide. It has often been carried by the hearers to distant points which no missionary has reached. In the work of our own mission a different method was usually employed. The missionaries in travelling from place to place sought opportunities by the wayside, in market towns or villages, and less frequently in the large cities, for preaching to those who gathered about them, and this work is still extensively carried on.

It is very remarkable that in a non-Christian country like China, under a strict despotism, with the strong prejudice against foreigners, and a keen desire to restrict in every way their intercourse with the people, there has yet been such entire freedom for the preaching of the Gospel. We have been free to stand up anywhere and preach to all who choose to listen, and now the door is more widely open than ever for such work. Tie-chiu is an ideal field for the evangelistic missionary. Busy towns and large villages are so thickly planted over the country that he need never travel far without finding ample room and opportunity for evangelistic preaching.

A WAYSIDE INN

The agricultural people seem to be naturally more open-minded than those of the cities, and their work absorbs their attention less closely than do the occupations of shopkeepers and other dwellers in the cities. It is necessary to study the habits of the people to discover the best times and opportunities for preaching. I have sometimes gone into a large village, hoping to preach to the people, and found it almost entirely deserted except by a very few old people, some women, and a large number of the youngest children. The men were scattered far and wide over the fields at their work, and during the busy seasons it is almost impossible to get access to them in the daytime. On the other hand, men who work at hard physical labour all day do not generally form a very lively audience if one attempts to speak to them at night. But there is one hour of the day which is often best of all for evangelistic work. When the men have returned from the fields, eaten their supper, and had their bath, especially in the spring and summer evenings, they gather in the outskirts of the village to enjoy the evening breeze and talk over village affairs in the cool of the evening. At this time, especially if it be a moonlight night, occurs the best opportunity of all for evangelistic preaching. Under the great banyan tree of the village or in any open space, the missionary may present himself to them and very easily get into friendly conversation. In most cases some friendly neighbour will bring out a seat and invite him to sit down. Someone else perhaps brings a table and a lantern, or offers tea. With some such friendly introduction it is very pleasant to begin to speak to them of higher things, and they will often listen with quiet attention for a long time. A little experience of such work shows one how needful it is to consider carefully the topics to be treated, and the best ways of presenting the Gospel. One must be guided largely by the circumstances of

the moment, and it is seldom possible to choose a text and deliver a formal discourse according to a pre-conceived plan. One learns, too, that certain topics are apt to lead to inconvenient interruption, or distraction of thought, or unprofitable argument or discussion. There are certain points at which we must sooner or later unequivocally condemn ideas and observances which are highly cherished, but it is part of the preacher's art to avoid raising these questions prematurely. There are also departments of Christian theology, profoundly important in themselves, but liable to be misunderstood or difficult of comprehension, which ought not to be prominently brought forward at an early stage. The most useful discourses will generally be found to be those which link themselves on most naturally to the preliminary conversation. Very often things will take some such course as the following :—The missionary, who, if possible, should be accompanied by two or three earnest and sympathetic native assistants, may begin by friendly inquiries about the state of their crops and such local topics as may be of interest at the time. They will then probably ask where he comes from and where he is going, and the more straightforward and explicit his answers to these questions are the better. He may then ask them if they know why he has come to their village. This question reflects the thought that has been working in all their minds, and many good-natured guesses will be made as to the object of the visit. "Probably to shoot birds," someone will say, or someone else, "To do business"; and after putting aside several of these guesses, someone who has heard something of our mission work perhaps explains that the missionary has come to teach people to do good; or someone explains that he has come from some Christian chapel in the neighbourhood. The missionary may then take up the most of the talking somewhat as follows :—"My home is a long

way from here, forty or fifty days' journey across the seas, but I have been living in Swatow (or wherever it may be) for a great many years." By this time some exclamations will be made of wonder at a foreigner being able to speak their language, and he may go on : " When I first came to Swatow I could not speak your words because I had not learned them, just as you cannot speak mine, but I invited a Chinese graduate to teach me, and now I suppose you can all understand me. I am not a merchant, and have not come to do any business. Neither am I an officer sent by our Queen, nor have I come to shoot birds. I belong to the mission in Swatow, but we have a great many chapels over the country, and I am on my way to visit some of them. In passing through your village I thought you might like to hear what people mean by worshipping Shang-ti. If you would like to hear about it I shall be happy to talk to you ; but if you are too tired with your day's work, I will not trouble you." By this time there will probably be many calls to go on and let them hear all about it, and the missionary goes on : " When I came into your village I noticed that you all gathered round to look at me because my clothing is not like yours. The colour of my face is not the same ; as I said to you, my language is not the same ; and you see a great deal in me, as I see a great deal in you, that looks new and strange. But after all, although my home is a long way off and you live here, we have a great deal in common. How is it that I, who am a foreigner, and you, who are Chinese, have bodies so much alike ? And how is it that although I never saw you before I can know a great deal about you simply by knowing my own people and my own heart ? It is because we are all made by the one God who made heaven and earth and all things."

Now at this point there are two main lines of thought that are often followed. The mention of God may suggest

discussions which are of the nature of natural theology, and this is a favourite method with our native preachers. They speak of the works of God in nature as proving His being and attributes. They draw their illustrations from agricultural life, and point how God sends the sunshine and the rain, giving them bread from heaven and fruitful seasons, somewhat after the manner of St Paul's speech at Lystra. This line of thought may be illustrated and brightened by familiar sayings or proverbs whose truth will be recognised by all. Besides, it appeals readily to the great thought which, as I have said, underlies, after all, the endless confusions of idolatrous worship, that there is one Great Spirit who is above all, and who is the Maker and Preserver of Men. But this line of discourse has one drawback. By speaking first of the one true God and His worship the speaker is inevitably led to speak at an early stage of idolatry, and before he has had an opportunity of stating the great outlines of Christian teaching he is apt to involve himself in collision with idolatrous worship, which is after all the only form of religious worship practically known to the people. For this reason I have often preferred at this point to take a different line, which also suggests itself naturally enough, and seems fitted to lead on to more satisfactory results. After speaking of God and His Fatherly goodness, without touching on the question of idolatry at all, one may naturally suggest that a God so good and beneficent deserves our love and service, and so the discourse may go on somewhat as follows.

After saying that all men are essentially alike as made by the one God, one may press the thought a stage further and say that although unlike in outward appearance, we are one in heart and inner feelings; or to put the thought in Chinese form, that we, too, have "the seven passions" or emotions. These are joy, anger, grief, fear, love, hatred and desire. Then one may say: "There is one strange thing which we see in the west, and which I think is the

same among you in China, that it is easier to do wrong than to do right, and that whilst we know what is good we do not do it. Have you any people in this village who always do right? Any people who are perfectly good?" The answer to this question is usually a general laugh, and the question is put in return: "Where would you look for such people?" "Well," I say, "I have never seen such people at home in my own country, and I have asked for them in a great many places in China, and have never found them yet. Now, I do not say that you Chinese are all bad and that we people of the West are all good, nor do I say that you are worse than we are, but knowing my own people, or rather knowing my own heart I know all about you though I have never seen you before. Now, you in China are great admirers of filial piety. You are always saying that the children ought to reverence and obey their fathers and mothers. Now, how many of you children (there is usually an inner circle composed of the children gathered round the preacher) always do what your father and mother tell you?" At this question there are generally smiles amongst the children, and exegetical remarks amongst the older people, who rejoice to see the faults of the children pointed out. "Again," one continues, "again, you know that men should speak the truth, and how many are there here who have never told a lie? Everyone knows that it is wrong to gamble, but what will you say if I ask how many of you gamble?" Probably at this stage someone will say: "No one here gambles," only to be put down by general cries of "Quite right, gambling is very bad, but everybody does it."

Continuing in some such line as this, one is able to appeal to their own consciences on the great distinctions between right and wrong, and there is generally a frank acknowledgment of wrong-doing on all hands. I remember only one occasion when an old man on the outskirts of the crowd who was only listening at intervals,

his attention being distracted by some household occupations, became very indignant at the statement that there were no good people, and left his rice baskets to jump into the crowd and cry out: "No good people! If there are no good people there is no such thing as right and wrong! What nonsense!" But in almost every case, if one has at all got the ear of the people, there is a quiet acknowledgment of wrong-doing. The length to which this subject may be carried will depend on time and circumstances, but when attention has been roused, an opportunity is created of setting forth Jesus Christ first of all as the one man of all men who has lived a perfect life, and then as the Divine Saviour who is able to break for men the old bondage of sin, and to make possible for them the better life which in their best moments they have vainly desired, but have not yet learned to live. At this stage it is often very profitable to give a simple narrative of the life and work of Jesus Christ. His life as a religious teacher is in its outward form easily apprehended by a people whose own ideal great man was essentially a public teacher of morals. The cruelty and injustice of the rulers of the people, and the pride and bigotry of the literary caste of the Pharisees, all present points of human nature of which they can easily lay hold; and even when you speak to them of Jesus Christ dying as a malefactor, it is not difficult for them to grasp some idea of His infinite superiority to those who slew Him. At this stage of Gospel preaching it is perhaps better to speak of the Lord's death as a historical fact, without trying to present it in a theoretical setting, and to pass on to the resurrection as being on the one hand the proof of His divinity, and on the other justifying us in setting Him forth not merely as a great teacher who was done to death in olden times, but as a living Saviour who has sent us to preach Him to them as their Saviour from their own sins.

In this way one reaches readily the great central ideas

of our Christian teaching, and is able to present them to the people without the previous irritation or unnecessary offence which would be created by discussions on the question of idolatry. Besides, the line which has been followed has brought strongly before them the fact that on all great moral questions our teaching is on the side of what is good, and pure, and true. You have carried with you from the beginning the consciences of the best of your audience, and before entering into discussions with them have removed from their minds the impression which has often been lurking there, that we are teachers who overthrow religion and are reckless of morality.

That such an opinion should be widely spread regarding our teaching is not to be wondered at. Those who know anything of our teaching and the practice of Christian converts must know that we discourage both the worship of idols and the worship of ancestors. We say ourselves that we testify against idolatrous worship, but, put into popular Chinese, this aspect of our teaching is described as "teaching people not to reverence spirits and not to regard parents." It is very easy, therefore, for the idea to spring up in Chinese minds that ours is essentially an irreligious and irreverent teaching. Of course there are persons who say so with the deliberate intention to slander and calumniate; but there must be many ignorant people who repeat this assertion with a sincere belief in it, and with a real grief that such principles as they have been taught to attribute to us should be preached far and wide among their people. For the sake of such persons, who are often among the best and most open-minded of the people, it is very important to insist largely and at an early stage of our teaching upon Christian ethics. From the first Christianity has had to prove itself by the fruits which it produces in the lives of its followers, and much is gained when we give a Chinese audience some assurance that on moral questions our teaching is on the side of

right. In the early days of mission work in south China it was much commoner than it is now for objectors to allege that our teaching is morally bad ; but now a much more common remark is, " Your teaching is good, but it is too hard." With that idea widely spread amongst the minds of the non-Christian people, our battle is already half won. When they say that our teaching is too hard, they tell us that they have come to see that it points out to them a higher ideal than their own, and that what we most emphatically condemn are the evils of which their own consciences have already told them.

Sooner or later the question of idolatry must be faced with almost every Chinese audience. If nothing is said upon that subject, it will be assumed that, while sanctioning the already existing idolatry, you only propose to add one more to the already numerous objects of worship ; but if you can secure that the question shall only arise after your audience has become aware that you attach great importance to sound morals, and that the religion which you preach both teaches reverence towards the divine, and supplies the strongest motives to the discharge of duty in all the relations of life, then you can without offence handle the question of idolatry with a freedom which would otherwise have been impossible. You can show that at best it has arisen from paying excessive honour to those who, after all, were only the distinguished men of ancient time, and you can point out with great effect, their own consciences bearing witness, that it has entirely failed to secure in actual life the practice of virtue.

Many a happy evening have I spent in talking in this strain under the moonlight in the cool evening air with a friendly and attentive audience. But you must not suppose evangelistic preaching is always so idyllic as this. Select your times and opportunities when you can, but you must also be prepared to take them as they come. Sometimes you must preach in the heat of the day under

a burning sun, or in some scanty spot of shade, to a restless and continually changing audience. In that case it is manifestly useless to attempt a long and systematic address. However good the plan of it as it lies in your own mind may be, you must remember that the members of your changing audience carry away only disconnected fragments, and your aim must be with as much variety as possible to reiterate frequently, briefly, and strikingly, some of the main points of Christian teaching. Sometimes the opportunity may occur in a large town where a crowd of several hundred persons gather round you. This is most likely to occur in visiting for the first time large centres where foreigners have seldom or never been seen. In such a case it may often be necessary to give some idea of foreign countries and their relations with China, and to satisfy their natural curiosity on foreign life and customs. I have often read laments from missionaries that on such a first meeting with a non-Christian audience, attention is distracted by irrelevant questions about our clothing, its material and price, and so on. I have never felt that such questions are in any way to be deprecated. Anything that brings the people near to us, and gives us a hold on their interest at any one point, is clear gain. Moreover, there is generally in the Chinese mind a preconceived assumption that no foreigner can speak Chinese, and this assumption often really prevents their understanding the first sentences which they hear from a foreigner, no matter how good a speaker of their language he may be. A little preliminary conversation, irrelevant as it may seem to the ardent evangelist who wishes to reach his subject at once, so far from being an undesirable distraction of attention, is really of great advantage. When the audience is large, and is disposed, as on the occasion of a first visit it generally is, to remain listening for a considerable length of time, it is well to cover as much ground as possible in preaching to them.

It is an opportunity of awakening general interest which may not recur in the same place. By the time the missionary has become a familiar spectacle in any town his audiences are likely to diminish in number, and these first opportunities never again recur. The evangelist must by experience acquire the art of gaining a hearing and of managing his audience. Much will depend on the positions in which he chooses to speak. He should avoid temple doors where the priests may make an objection to his presence, busy and crowded thoroughfares, shop doors, and the neighbourhood of itinerant vendors of food. In such positions the crowd which soon gathers round interrupts business, interferes with traffic, and the preacher's action is apt to be bitterly and not unjustly resented by those whose business is thus interfered with. A little care will generally enable one to find open spaces—all the better if they are not too large—at no great distance from the crowded thoroughfares, where those who choose can turn aside and listen without causing inconvenience to others. A little consideration in matters of this kind will often do more to commend the Gospel to the quiet people of the neighbourhood than the utmost zeal which is not mingled with discretion. In open-air preaching I have always found it very advantageous when possible to select a spot in the neighbourhood of a dead wall, and to stand facing it at some little distance. The audience then gather between the speaker and the wall, the sound is retained, and they are shut off from disturbance or interruption. In work of this kind it is of great importance to have at least one or two active and sympathetic assistants. No one should speak for too long a time at once. The foreign missionary and his assistants may with great advantage speak in turn, and the variety of thought and subject will often serve to hold an audience together for a much longer time than could be done by one speaker. Besides, the voice of a native

speaker supporting and enforcing Christian teaching, with a wealth of local knowledge and native experience which no missionary can possess, carries much weight with a native audience. The missionary, when not himself engaged in speaking, can use his time profitably in watching the audience, marking down individuals who may seem to be interested, and taking mental note of questions that may be put or objections that may be raised. This will be of great service to him when his turn comes round again. But as a general rule a second address should be very short, confining itself to some friendly enforcement of what has been already said, with an intimation of where the nearest place of Christian worship may be found, and a hearty invitation to all present to visit it at any time.

Tact is sometimes needed as to the missionary's relations with his native assistants. They are not all equally competent speakers, and if anyone is seen to be manifestly losing his hold of the audience, the missionary should not allow a good opportunity to be wasted by his inefficiency. On the other hand, he must not be abruptly and discourteously checked. If another native speaker is present, it will often be sufficient to ask the speaker to close shortly, and make way for him. Or the missionary may himself take advantage of any question put or remark made to resume speaking himself. Some of the native speakers are specially gifted for this kind of work; but I have seen a thoroughly good man of the highest Christian character and large knowledge of the truth, who, through defect of voice or hesitancy of manner, was apt, in such circumstances, to scatter the audience. An open-air audience shows its lack of interest in the speaker at once by the hum of conversation which arises as soon as the strain of attention is broken, and presently begins to move and scatter. I remember in such circumstances calling upon another native preacher, greatly the inferior of the first in Christian experience and range of knowledge,

but who to real earnestness added a singular natural gift of good expression and a pleasant manner. I have seen the half-dissolved audience settle itself again to a fresh interest in his address, and an opportunity of reaching a large number of people was thus saved. In short, the missionary, whether himself speaking or calling upon his native assistants, must always be vigilantly on the watch, and never lose his control of what is going on.

A good deal of tact and discretion must be used in dealing with interruptions and questions. A question that is sincerely put is always to be welcomed. It shows interest, and helps the speaker in adapting what he says to the mind of his audience. Some native speakers can make a very happy use of questions put to them, but I have heard some who resented anything of the kind, their only answer to a question being, "You be quiet, and let me talk." This is both discourteous and impolitic, because a quiet and reasonable answer to a reasonable question always appeals strongly to the good sense of a Chinese audience, and the man who evades a question is naturally suspected of having something to conceal. On the other hand, the open-air preacher must be on his guard against questions which are wholly irrelevant or not very important, and still more against questions which are designed to lead him into a snare. Sometimes a question is put in all good faith and with a real desire for information, but the answer would lead one too far afield, and break the main line of address. Sometimes an intelligent question merely anticipates something which you intend to say later on after preparing the way for it. In cases like these it is a mistake to allow yourself to be diverted from your proposed line of argument, and if you courteously reply that the point will be dealt with later on, or that you wish first to finish what you had intended to say, and will then return to the subject raised by the questioner, you will generally find that the questioner himself

is satisfied, and that you carry your audience with you. If a question is put manifestly for the purpose of interrupting and giving annoyance, there are different ways in which it may be dealt with. Sometimes a brief pointed answer that turns the tables on the inquirer will both silence him and secure the keener attention of the others. If interruptions of this kind are repeated it may be well to appeal to the courtesy of the audience as a whole, or to treat the interruptions as an annoyance to them, and request the interrupter to be silent and allow others to hear. The two essentials in dealing with interruptions are that the speaker should be on the alert to discriminate between fair and unfair questions, and that in all circumstances he should perfectly keep his temper. A little good-humoured banter will often turn a hostile and restless audience into friendly and attentive listeners.

Sometimes you may with advantage allow the whole line of your address to be determined by remarks or questions addressed to you, but you must always remain master of yourself and master of your audience. In some cases a very good effect is produced by singling out one of the oldest men in the audience and requesting him to reprove or check any unruly interrupter. Your recognition of the respect due to an old man will be appreciated both by himself and by the rest of the audience. You will generally secure his assistance in keeping order, and the most unruly interrupter will in most cases be compelled to listen to him.

There are a certain number of stock objections which are often made, such as the following: "You teach people to reject their father and mother." "Where is your God? We cannot believe when we have never seen him." "We must follow the customs." "Your way is good for you; ours is good for us." But a Chinaman's objections are generally reasonable and tangible. They are not like those frequently met with by missionaries in India which

are purely captious, and so subtle as hardly to admit of reply; objections which are natural to the Hindoo mind, such as that "Man and God are one, and that all is divine"; or that "Nothing that we see has real existence"; that "The world and ourselves are all illusion." Objections such as these are never made by a Chinese hearer. In the early days of mission work there was sometimes rough and boisterous opposition, but that is not a frequent experience now at least, and one seldom meets with such things as I have read of in the experience of the evangelistic preacher in India. "Insults to you; calumnies or blasphemies against the Christian faith; wild, rash assertions, mingled perhaps with obscenity." These things we do not often meet with.

In evangelistic preaching, perhaps especially among a people like the Chinese, illustrations should be freely used, and the preacher must learn to cultivate the art of happy illustration. But they must be drawn from native life and manners. Illustrations drawn from things strange and foreign may sometimes tell if they are sufficiently vivid and obvious to explain themselves, but an illustration which itself needs explanation is doomed to failure. So is an illustration drawn from native life with insufficient knowledge or inaccuracy of detail. For these reasons the man who would be an evangelistic preacher must not expect to stand up before the people and say anything that comes into his mind. He must continuously observe, and think, and prepare, if he would speak with advantage to a general audience.

References to Chinese history or literature, if judiciously used, are often helpful. They awaken interest amongst a people who, even when ignorant, have a proud, if somewhat vague, sense of the greatness of their national history. It flatters their self-esteem to find that a foreigner has read and is familiar with their books and their great men. It gives them confidence also in his asser-

tions and arguments, and from the wide range of Chinese history, characters and incidents may be readily drawn which will illustrate and enforce points of Christian teaching.

The question has been often discussed whether it is well for the Christian teacher to quote weighty sentences from the Chinese classics. It seems natural that one should do so, and the support of books held in such high esteem among the people is often welcomed by the preacher as a valuable support to his teaching. Some of our native preachers are very fond of quoting expressions of this kind ; but I have noticed that these quotations are most freely made by the least scholarly and thoughtful men, and, on the whole, I am inclined to accept as correct the judgment of an experienced missionary who has long been an evangelistic preacher, that a sermon in which Confucius is quoted is a sermon spoiled. The reason for this lies here. The Chinaman, while an acute reasoner along the lines of his own mental development, is seldom strictly logical in his mental processes. If you quote Confucius to him he does not draw the inference that Confucius supports your teaching, but rather that your teaching is drawn from Confucius. Hence such quotations are apt to give the impression that after all we are only enforcing the teaching of the Confucian books. It is not necessary for us in public preaching to come into needless collision with these venerable authorities ; but it is probably better that we should rest our Christian teaching upon its own proper basis, and refrain from quotations the effect of which is at least doubtful.

But this objection need not hinder us from freely using illustrations drawn from Chinese history, and familiar proverbial sayings may often be used with good effect. It is important for the evangelistic preacher to be somewhat familiar with the background of the thinking of his audience, and for this purpose he cannot be a too diligent student of Chinese history and literature. He will find

in these both mental discipline for himself and points of contact with the Chinese mind, and will thus find himself brought into nearer relations with even the most ignorant of his audience.

Friends of missions at home often speak of sending evangelists to China with the idea that for such work scholarship and education are not required. They seem to think that these things may be necessary for literary or educational work, but that any Christian man or woman is necessarily fitted for such elementary work as the evangelisation of a heathen people. I believe there could not be a more profound mistake, and that the evangelist ought to labour more than any other to attain, on the one hand, a thorough knowledge of the people amongst whom he labours, and on the other, a thorough knowledge and free use of their language.

I have now spoken of evangelistic preaching as carried on in settled positions, such as permanent halls or chapels on the main streets of great cities, and to open-air audiences in the course of itineration among the towns and villages. There is one other form of it of which a few words may be said here. Our mission hospitals afford one of the most favourable fields for the evangelist, both by preaching and by personal intercourse with individual patients. In our Swatow hospital, for example, we have an average of about 180 in-patients in the hospital throughout the year, and on some days of the week there are besides large numbers of out-door or dispensary patients. Every morning and evening worship is held in the hospital chapel, which all the patients are welcome to attend. The majority of them suffer from chronic ailments which do not confine them to bed, and the chapel is usually filled with an audience of patients and their friends, often numbering considerably over 200. The preaching at these services is carried on by the foreign missionaries and native assistants in turn. The patients

A MID-DAY HALT

are often resident in the hospital for several weeks, or even months, at a time. They have thus the opportunity of hearing continuous Christian teaching, and they have besides long hours of enforced leisure throughout the day, during which the truth which they have heard is turned over in their minds. The fact that they are receiving kindly attention both from the foreign physician and from his native assistants has already made a favourable impression on their minds, and renders them specially susceptible to Christian influences. For this reason the opportunities afforded in the hospital for evangelistic preaching are of special value, although it is perhaps not always easy to take the best possible advantage of them. The preacher, is liable, perhaps, to a temptation to speak to these people as patients, rather than as men and women, and this is a temptation to be resisted. They will be best reached by preaching not essentially differing in method and matter from evangelistic preaching by the wayside.

In connection with evangelistic preaching, whether in halls or in the open air, large use may be advantageously made of Christian books and tracts. Of these we have now at our disposal a very large variety, and many of them well fitted for such use. Chinese coinage happily allows of a very minute sub-division of values, and sheet tracts or small books may be sold for prices as low as one or two cash, a cash being at present equivalent to about one-tenth part of a farthing. These books contain brief explanations of Christian teaching and worship, the doctrine of one true God, Jesus Christ as the Saviour, the vanity of idolatrous worship, and exhortations on moral topics. One sheet which has been very useful consists of the text of the ten commandments with brief notes, and a short statement of the Gospel way of salvation for sinners who have broken the law of God. Another gives the names of towns and villages in which Christian places of worship may be found, with the dates on which the

Lord's Day falls, and a very brief statement of the outlines of Christian teaching. Of these two sheets very large numbers have been circulated throughout the Tiechiu district, and nearly every native Christian has a copy pasted up on the walls of his home, or on the door, where all may see, and where it takes the place of the usual idolatrous charms and inscriptions. In the early days of mission work books and tracts were often given away freely, but now this is seldom done. It is found that books which are sold are much more likely to be preserved and read than those which are carelessly given away, and the price is so low that it neither deters buyers nor does it create any impression that the preacher is selling for the sake of gain. In special cases larger books are sometimes given, especially where any kindness or courtesy has been shown, of which one wishes to make some slight acknowledgment. The Bible Societies have for many years provided single Gospels in the shape of small books, which are sold at the price of five cash, or half a farthing. We have now been able to persuade the Bible Societies to give us these Gospels with very brief explanatory notes, referring chiefly to names, places, and local customs which present difficulty to the Chinese reader. By their constitution and practice the Bible Societies are strictly pledged not to annotate the Scriptures which they circulate, in any doctrinal sense, but the concession now made of giving notes which are in no way doctrinal, greatly increases the value of books of Scripture for evangelistic use.

Books not only help hearers to remember something of what they have heard, but, being carried to their homes, they often interest others who have not been reached by the preacher. Men have thus been brought to the truth by what they have read; and in some cases the Christian Church has been planted in new places by little companies of worshippers who have gathered round a stray copy of some Christian book.

LECTURE VII

THE SECOND STAGE OF MISSION WORK: THE PLANTING OF THE CHURCH

WE may now ask what results may be expected from the various kinds of evangelistic preaching, such as have now been described. What aim should the preacher set before him, and what does experience teach us as to the results usually achieved?

It appears to me that two views may be taken by the preacher of the object at which he should aim. He may either seek (1) to carry if possible all the members of his audience with him, interesting all, and addressing himself to all alike, or (2) he may aim rather at reaching some amongst them, and feel that his essential work is being done even though many should be manifestly indifferent and careless. At first sight it will probably appear to you that it is the preacher's duty to seek to carry with him all alike. This view will lead us to insist upon great simplicity of statement, and clearness of illustration, and to feel a great unwillingness to allow any to reject the message. It is well, perhaps, that one should begin his evangelistic work with such ideas, but it seems to me that there is good ground for thinking that experience and reflection will considerably modify them. The evangelistic preacher must often feel how great are the barriers which exist between his mind, and still more between his own spiritual experience, and those of his hearers. Indeed, if he allows his mind to dwell largely on thoughts of this kind, he may well feel discouragement, if not despair. He cannot help being conscious of a spiritual deadness which reacts upon himself, and restrains and

cools his most earnest appeals to them. He will be tempted, perhaps, to lower the spiritual levels of his teaching and expostulation, in order to meet the unspiritual audience, as it were, half-way. He will feel that he is failing in his mission, perhaps that he is sinning against his audience, if he allows any of them, however callous and prejudiced, to remain unreached. The result of this line of thinking is apt to be what I have often seen it become, especially in the hands of our native brethren. All that is deeply spiritual, including what is most profoundly moving in Christian thought, is apt to be laid aside as too high and deep for those addressed. Attention is fastened upon a few elementary thoughts, and these are treated in the most elementary way, with the idea of bringing them within the reach of the least awakened and most unspiritual mind. When this is done the sweep and force of Gospel preaching is gone, and yet the result has been reached by so natural a process of reasoning that many an evangelistic preacher must have deeply felt as if he had been shut up by his position to this disastrous course.

I venture to think that another line of thought will suggest a truer idea of the evangelist's position and duty, and lead to happier results in his preaching. It is to be assumed at the outset that the bulk of the audience is indeed not only ignorant but unspiritual, and incompetent to apprehend spiritual truth. At the same time conscience remains, and even in the midst of heathenism remains in some degree awake. If spirituality is wanting in the hearers, it needs to be realised all the more that the preacher must look throughout for the presence and working of the Spirit of God both in his own heart and in the heart of any whom his message is to reach. I believe experience shows that even in a so-called heathen audience there may be some, however small a minority they may be. who have been in some way touched by the

providence of God and prepared to receive Christian teaching. They may be very little awake, and they have as yet practically no knowledge of divine truth, but they have reached a position which makes them the proper material for the working of the Gospel. Now in preaching the evangelist may consciously elect to aim specially at minds of this class. He does not suppose that his audience consists of prepared spiritual men, but the belief that there may be such amongst them gives him a larger range of freedom in the presentation of divine truth. He knows that success does not depend ultimately on the vividness of his illustration, or the force of his argument to open the door to the Spirit of God, working through his own mind and utterance upon the minds of those who hear. With this feeling uppermost in his mind he will not hesitate to set forth views of truth which he knows are far above the actual mental and spiritual level of many of his hearers. The result will be that even among these darkened minds there will be some recognition of the divine power of truth, and some token of the working in their hearts of the Spirit of God. Indeed, it is only some such view as this which will enable the evangelist amongst the heathen to sustain his belief in the power and efficacy of Gospel preaching.

The considerations to which I have now referred will help to guide us as to the kind of results that are to be looked for in this department of mission work. Speaking to audiences to whom the whole matter spoken of is entirely new and strange, one does not expect that large numbers are to be immediately turned from darkness to light. When reference is made to the large numbers converted at Pentecost under the preaching of St Peter, it must be remembered that these were all persons who were already instructed in spiritual religion, worshippers of the true God, to whom it was only necessary to point out Jesus Christ as the Messiah promised to their fathers

and entitled to claim their allegiance and worship. In preaching to the heathen we meet with no such general preparation of heart. But experience shows that on the mission field, as in New Testament times, individual cases are not infrequently to be met with where there is perhaps some sense of sin, or at least some awakening of mind and inquiry after truth.

Accordingly, on looking back upon the evangelistic work of my own mission, and I believe the experience of others is not materially different, one notices that there are a number of well-marked individual cases where the hearing of evangelistic preaching was the beginning of the Christian life. These cases are not numerous relatively to the whole number of converts, but they are usually cases of persons with a well-marked individuality, and whose after career as members of the Christian Church has given evidence of more than usual earnestness and fitness for Christian service.

Take, for instance, the first convert of the English Presbyterian Mission in Tie-chiu. His name was Tan Khai-lin. At the age of twelve he was left to the care of his mother on the death of his father, who had been a military officer of no great rank. An uncle with whom he lived became involved in difficulties on account of a lawsuit brought against him by the relatives of a man who was accidentally shot during archery practice. To escape from his difficulties Khai-lin's uncle came to Swatow, and brought his nephew along with him. While there they heard that a foreigner was, as the Chinese say, "telling old stories" in a street chapel. They went to hear and see. Khai-lin continued his attendance for some time and attracted the attention of the missionary who was in charge. He was by this time sixteen years of age, and having received a good education, he was asked by the missionary to assist him by doing some Chinese writing. When the work was finished he pro-

posed to return home, but on conversation with the missionary it appeared that the truth which he had been hearing now for some months had found a lodgment in his mind. He was told that if he was indeed a believer in Christ it was his duty to confess him in baptism. He said he would return home and consult his mother, but after some conversation he made up his mind that he would seek baptism before he left. In later days he remarked: "At that time, though I said I was a sinner and believed in Jesus, both my sense of sin and my faith were very shallow, and I have since found out more fully how great my sin is, and also how great the grace of Christ is." He was baptised, and shortly after returned home. On telling his mother the new truths which he had learned, he was greatly surprised and delighted to find that instead of showing displeasure as he had expected, she bowed her head in token of assent and approval as he put forward point after point of Christian teaching. She too afterwards visited Swatow, accepted the Gospel, and received baptism.

The point that interested Khai-lin when he first heard Christian preaching was the preaching of one living God who created and governs all, and whom all men might worship. He saw the error and folly of his former prayers and offerings to the idols, and said to himself, "Clearly I am in the wrong road altogether." When he heard of Jesus Christ as the Saviour for sinners he was at first stimulated to try to do right and refrain from evil, and before long was led to trust for success in Christ alone.

In after years, when Khai-lin had become himself a preacher of the Gospel, he accompanied a missionary to a market town to preach to the people. A farmer in the neighbourhood, who came amongst others to hear, has given a graphic account of his own experiences as a hearer. When the preaching began the people were saying "What are they talking about?" "Oh," said one, "they tell us that we should renounce our father and

mother." But others exclaimed, "Let us hear what they have got to say." On that occasion Khai-lin began by saying: "Everything has a lord and master; every house, field, ship. The District Magistrate is master of the District; the Viceroy of the Province; the Emperor of the Empire. Surely, then, heaven and earth have a great Lord who has universal control and authority over them. This is the God whom we preach to you." The farmer, whose name was Lou-ji, says that he felt at once that this was the truth, and stood listening very earnestly to what was said by both preachers. Some disputed with them, and said, "Then we must not worship idols?" "No," said the preachers, "they are only departed men. Worship belongs to God alone." "Formerly," says Lou-ji, "I had been very angry on hearing that the foreigners condemned idol worship, but standing there that day I felt in my heart that they were right. A remark made by Khai-lin made a special impression upon my mind. An old woman in the crowd asked him, 'But now, teacher, tell us, how is this God of yours to be worshipped?' To which he replied, 'You must understand, madam, that this God whom we preach is not the God of Western nations only. He is the God of heaven and earth, and all nations and men alike have a part in Him, and ought to worship and serve Him; and as He is everywhere present and knows all things, we can always pray to Him wherever we are, women in their own houses, and men when they are on a journey or engaged in work.' I was more and more interested as the preaching went on. Several persons asked questions, but I did not ask any, though I eagerly attended to every word that was said. So fully was I convinced of the truth of what was being said, that I had often drawn the conclusion in my own mind before the preacher had expressed it.

"When the preachers had left, their words remained in my heart. So fully were my thoughts occupied, that all

THREE MINISTERS AND FOUR ELDERS
(LOU-JI ON LEFT AT BACK)

my curiosity about seeing the foreigner was forgotten, and I did not even inquire where he was going. On my way to my own house I passed an idol temple where I had been accustomed to worship very regularly twice a month, and I thought within my own mind, 'Ay, I need come no more to you. Now I will worship God only.' I said nothing to anyone about what was passing within my heart, but that night I could not sleep for thinking of what I had heard, and in the middle of the night I resolved to rise and pray. It used to be my custom before worshipping the idol to wash myself, and I thought 'O God, thou art great, and I must come cleansed into thy presence'; so I lighted a fire and warmed water for this purpose, and then I prayed to God for the first time. My wife could not understand my conduct, and asked me 'What is the matter? Can you not sleep?' But I said nothing. Up to this time I had been a zealous idolater, and had an incense vessel by my door in which I regularly burned incense. My next door neighbour was also a devoted worshipper, and used to observe the same daily service. When I began to neglect it, my neighbour asked me one day, 'How does it happen that you who were so earnest have given up all attention to the idol?' I was as yet only making an experiment to see whether any harm would come of it, so I said nothing. Even my wife knew nothing as yet of my secret thoughts.

"In about two months more I had to go away, on account of the sugar harvest, to the boiling shed where there were many persons employed, and I was in great difficulty as to how I should act. It was the custom that before beginning work the chief workman should act as spokesman in praying to the idol whose shrine was set up inside the shed, so on the very first day I was called upon to do what I had come to see was wrong. I did not venture to say that I had given up idolatry, but pretending to be busy with some piece of work in

another part of the shed, I said, 'Just go on yourselves with the worship.' 'What does he say?' they asked one another. 'He bids us go on with the worship ourselves. What can he mean?' Then after waiting some time they called to me again, 'Come away and worship the idol,' and I answered in a loud and imperious voice that they should go on by themselves; which, after many murmurs and whispers of displeasure, they did. While I was at that place I prayed every night to God, retiring to a quiet place for that purpose, but on moonlight nights it was difficult to avoid being seen. All this time I knew nothing of trust in Jesus, or of praying in His name. When the sugar harvest was nearly over, two Christians came to the village where I was at work to visit a Christian woman there. It so happened that they met the old gentleman for whom I was working, and gave him a sheet tract containing the calendar of the Sabbaths for the year. The old gentleman came to the place where we were working and related the incident to us, remarking that he did not want their tract and gave it back to them, and that he feared those two strangers were not after any good in coming there to invite Mrs Pocket to their meetings. Mrs Pocket, also, was acting very improperly in having anything to do with foreigners and worshipping God. All who were present agreed in condemning her conduct. While they were going on in this way, I, who knew better, felt my heart burning within me, and could refrain no longer, so I said to them, 'You think that the worship of God is a bad thing, do you not?' 'We don't have it here.' 'Yes, but never mind whether we have it or not, the question is, Is it right or wrong? These people worship God who made all things and cares for us all, and instead of blaming them we ought all to worship Him.' 'Oh, then, you also worship God?' 'Yes,' I replied, 'I do, but I am still very ignorant,

and my worship very defective.' 'Well, well, you are ruined entirely. There is no good of you any more.'

"Now I felt I was committed, and must inquire further into the truth. I had many revilings from the neighbours. When I defended my conduct they would say, 'Oh! you are very clever; we must all come to learn of you!' (From which one may learn that human nature in China has points of resemblance with human nature elsewhere.) A rich man who used to be very friendly with me said I ought to be drowned (the village remedy for cases of exceptional depravity). The hardest part of this trial was to find people so bitter in their hatred against teaching which I knew to be so good. Mrs Crab came to ask me about the teaching, and said it was very good. 'But,' she said, 'though the teaching is so excellent, they are all saying they are going to drown you.' 'Well,' I thought, 'I must be more decided than ever.' Now Mrs Crab has been a consistent Christian for more than ten years.

"Then my neighbour, Mrs Goose, of whom I have spoken, asked me why I did not now worship the idol, and I said I now worshipped the great God. She believed what I told her, and became a worshipper of God also, though her husband was very bitterly opposed to her. I used to pray with her for the conversion of her husband, and after a time it pleased God to send him a disease of the eyes, so that he had to go to the hospital at Swatow. There his eyes were cured and his heart changed, and he too became a Christian.

"I paid a visit to my wife's mother, and told her about the Lord Jesus Christ and the true God. She was alarmed, and said, 'Son-in-law, do you worship God as you think right, but don't ask us to do so.' Afterwards, however, the Lord opened her heart, and she and her son both became members of the Church at Iam-tsau."

I have given this story in detail, and nearly in the words of the man himself, because it is a convenient

record of a typical case. It is all very commonplace, and therefore of intense interest. It may happen any day. There was no very keen emotion, and there was never any great attainment in knowledge. Poor Lou-ji, Mr Cormorant! his lights were never brilliant, but they burned true. There seems to have been from the beginning a real spiritual experience. The Spirit, who moves where he will, had in some way touched this man's heart, and when he heard he followed. One sees in his story how little dogmatic knowledge was needed to sustain the beginnings of his spiritual life, and how natural it was for him, and how necessary, to tell to others the little he knew. While still an untaught beginner, he was already a successful evangelist, and led others to the truth. He lived a consistent life, and in his later years was chosen to be an elder in the Church of Phu-sua, his native place. One child died soon after he became a Christian, and with a heavy heart he carried the body out in his arms by night, and buried it in secret, lest his neighbours should take occasion to blaspheme the name of his God. His only son, a promising young man of twenty-seven, died but a year before himself. He was much comforted in his sorrows, but felt keenly the taunts of his neighbours. He died in 1900, a true man to the last. Now he understands, and his children are with him again.

So with Mrs Lim Hang, the "Beloved Persis," of whom I spoke in the first lecture. She was originally a Buddhist vegetarian of some earnestness when she heard Mr Burns preaching in the open air. There was evidently some preparation of heart, and she forthwith believed. She was a most zealous evangelist among the women for many a day, and died in the full possession of her faculties, respected and loved by all who knew her, at the age of eighty-eight.

Cases such as these could be collected doubtless on

every mission field. They represent one of the results of evangelistic preaching,—the direct enlightenment and gathering in of a few whose hearts God has opened, and these become the seed from which the Church is to spring.

But evangelistic preaching has another great result, which is too often under-rated. It helps to create an atmosphere in which it is possible for the nascent Church to live. It is easy to understand that when this new growth first appears it is often looked on with suspicion and dislike. The profession of Christianity by some plain man or woman seems to be a strange and perverse freak. It very often happens, too, that the first Christian in a village is not very able to give a clear explanation of his new faith. But by evangelistic work, carried on all over the country for a length of time, there is in most places some little knowledge lodged in men's minds of what the Christian teaching is. In the course of this work, too, the foreign missionaries, and the more enlightened church members become more or less known to large numbers of the people. Multitudes who understand nothing of Christian teaching know at least that it has an explanation of itself which it is in the habit of offering in public to all who choose to hear. Many even of those who have no thought of accepting the new faith themselves, have come to know that it is a good thing,—well-intentioned at least, even if rather impracticable. I have often had it said to me: "Yours is the right way. You come out into the open and tell us what your teaching is. The French (Roman Catholic) missionaries stay in their chapels and never come out to talk to us, but you have nothing to hide." Thus, instead of irritating, as is often assumed, the free religious teaching given everywhere makes a kindly impression on the public mind. When some of their own people begin to follow the new way, they are not so much surprised. They have begun to know that it is reasonable, and

that it is morally on the right side. They may not like the defection of their people from local customs, but they see that it is not due to individual perversity. So, even if they do not approve, they make up their minds to tolerate.

Now the creation of this kind of public opinion is a most valuable result of evangelistic work. It becomes easier for individual hearers to profess the Christian faith. The seed of the kingdom finds itself exposed to a less killing atmosphere, and time is given for it to grow. Thus a double process is going on. By dropping the seed in the prepared hearts of men and women one by one, and by so acting on public opinion as to make room and air for its growth, the evangelistic preaching does its work.

From the individual to the Church the transition is easy. By preaching and individual dealing, one here and another there is gathered out from the mass of heathenism. In many instances we have seen how one convert brings in another, and how this tendency to bring in others may be found even where the Christian life is only in its very early stages. I know one uneducated woman who has herself brought in about 100 persons. The ultimate result of such processes is the forming of one group after another of inquirers or Christians who in course of time become the founders of the Christian Church. For example, when mission work was begun in the Tie-chiu district, the missionaries at first confined themselves to the town of Swatow, or a small island at the mouth of the river which was then the residence of the foreign community. They paid occasional visits and formed acquaintances in some of the nearer villages. At Iam-tsau, some twenty-two miles from Swatow, they found some remains of the work of Mr Lechler, whose residence there I have already described. An interval of six or seven years had already elapsed since Lechler had left. Some of those who had heard from him had gone back to

heathenism, but some were found still holding on, and had even made progress in the interval. In ways like these a very small native church of three congregations was gradually formed. The native Christians early became helpers in spreading the Gospel, and inquirers were sometimes led from other towns in unexpected ways. For example, one group of inquirers was brought within the hearing of the Gospel in this way. A number of women who were zealous worshippers of the idols had formed themselves into a kind of religious society in one of the western villages. Their leader was a woman who professed to be a medium possessed at times by the spirits of the idols. She directed their worship, teaching them to fast and pray, and gave them utterances from time to time, professedly in name of the idols. They all believed in her as a sincere and devout worshipper who was further advanced in religious attainments than themselves. At length there came a time when she announced that she could do no more for them. She had taught them all she knew, and was conscious that her power was gone. There seems to have been amongst them some real sense of sin, and a desire for its forgiveness, but they were conscious that there was nothing in idolatry which could satisfy this desire. Their leader told them that if they wished anything more than she had been able to give them they must seek for it elsewhere. Whether any rumour of the Christian teaching which had begun in Swatow had come to her ears or not, we do not know, but in one of her utterances she said to them: "There are foreign teachers in Swatow who can tell you of a Saviour who is able to save you. You need not follow me any longer. I can do no more for you. Go to them and follow their teaching." The result was that ten women, including the medium, found their way to Swatow, a distance of about sixty miles, and came in one day to the street chapel where preaching was going on. They

afterwards spoke to the missionaries, and received further instruction. They remained a fortnight in the town, and all of them were baptised before they returned. The missionaries afterwards visited them in their own villages, others became interested, and the result of this singular movement was the planting of places of worship in two or three centres in a district of country to the west which had not formerly been reached.

At this stage of mission work when the number of worshippers is small, the usual practice has been to rent a room or small house, where those who are interested can be gathered together for Christian instruction. If possible a native preacher is placed at each of these outstations. It is his duty to conduct public worship on the Lord's Day, to visit those who may be interested at their homes, and to preach as opportunity offers to all who are willing to hear. The station is visited from time to time by one of the missionaries, who, besides preaching to the Christian worshippers, and to the others who gather round when a foreigner appears, often finds his principal work in examining those who are already inquirers and applicants for baptism. Some of these perhaps have been brought in through the teaching of the native preacher, but generally it is found that most of them have been influenced by the words, and still more by the life, of the native Christians. In this way the work spreads from point to point, so that now, when about forty years have elapsed, a connected chain of stations has been formed with Swatow as the centre, which reaches more or less to every part of the district in which the Tie-chiu dialect is spoken. It has even spread beyond the bounds of this dialect, and a second mission was afterwards formed for carrying on the work among the Hak-ka population in the hill country. In early days the missionaries spent much time in residence at some of the stations which were first opened. But as the number of stations multiplied it

A COUNTRY CHAPEL

became impossible to spend much time at each, and the work of supervision became more and more arduous. It was early seen that in order to keep pace with the demands of growing work it was indispensable to make much use of native agency. Efforts were early made to open schools for the education of Christian boys; and a class of older men was formed, with the view of training them to become preachers and teachers. Out of these elementary arrangements has grown in later years a fairly complete system of primary schools connected with all the principal out-stations, high schools for boys and girls, and a theological college or training school at the mission centre in Swatow for training teachers, preachers and ministers. At first the rate of growth in church membership was slow, but as the native members became themselves centres of influence in their homes and villages the rate of growth soon showed a tendency to increase.

In regard to the opening of new stations, it may be asked, What motives first led the people to attend? Some come because they have already heard something of the truth, and wish to know more. Here and there may be one who has heard the Gospel in the course of public preaching, but more have been brought by the teaching and private influence of members of the native Church. As in the early days of Christianity, those who have received the Gospel are instinctively led to bring in others also. "Many of the Christians," wrote Celsus in the second century, "without any special calling, watched for all opportunities, and both within and without the temples boldly proclaimed their faith." In many cases the first worshippers at a new centre consist of men or women who have formerly been going to some distant place of worship where a congregation had already been formed, and begged that a new centre should be opened in their neighbourhood. But while stations are thus opened as the result of a real desire of some to know

the truth, we are well aware that in a majority of cases other influences are at work. In a country like China, where the administration of justice is exceedingly corrupt, and where there is besides among the people a universal passion for litigation, lawsuits and matters of difficulty are continually arising between man and man. The decisions of the courts in such cases are seldom governed by the rights of the matter in dispute. Money and social influence are the main factors in securing a successful issue. Most Chinamen are therefore keenly desirous of securing any possible support or help in cases of this kind. It has long been the practice of the Roman Catholic missions in China to receive their converts into a political protectorate, giving them support in all cases of dispute with their non-Christian neighbours. Thus the idea has sprung up that the Christian Church is of the nature of a protective society, whose members and leaders will, as a matter of course, support each other in all matters of dispute or litigation. Again, in the early days of mission work professed converts often encountered the hostility of their fellow-villagers, and represented their difficulty to the early missionaries as due to persecution on account of their Christian faith. Now undoubtedly many cases occurred of real persecution for the Gospel's sake, and such cases are not unfrequent still, but it requires not a little experience and great care to discriminate between those cases which are really of the nature of persecution, and those which are not. Even when it is true that a man has recently become a Christian, and that his profession of the Christian faith has led to an outbreak of hostility against him, the case may not by any means be one of pure persecution for the Gospel's sake. It may be only the latest chapter of a quarrel which has no connection with religion, but which has been going on with varying fortunes for years, and possibly for generations, before. When the Christians were very few and oppo-

sition violent and keen, missionaries were no doubt in some cases led to give unwise vent to their sympathy with those who seemed to be suffering for their Christian profession. Incidents like these, which were errors of inexperience on the part of Protestant missionaries, have been so frequent in the Roman Catholic missions, that interference in disputes of this kind has become with them a settled policy. Accordingly where a new group of Christian worshippers begins to gather, there is often a tendency for many others to join themselves with them, who have no spiritual or religious interest in the movement, but have only private or worldly ends to serve. It is always necessary in the beginnings of a new movement of this sort to watch it most carefully, and to discriminate between the different elements of which it is composed. Often those who make themselves most prominent as the leaders of the new movement, and most urgent in begging to be recognised as Christian worshippers, are not those whose influence is likely to be most helpful in the young Christian community. They are perhaps men of some social standing in their village, or men who are more deeply involved than others in social rivalries or litigations, and their influence upon the young church is sometimes of the most hurtful kind.

In these movements there may sometimes be as many as two or three or four hundred persons who gather themselves together as professed inquirers. A few of these, as I have said, may be real seekers after truth, a few are schemers with their own ends to serve, and there are often many who have more or less hope of assistance in worldly matters, but who have no evil purposes in view. They gather where they see others going, and may be turned towards good or evil according to the prevailing influences among which they find themselves. It is often best, in the early stages of such a movement, that the foreign missionary should not appear in person. Native

preachers are first sent to make the acquaintance of the people, and to give them day by day elementary instruction in Christian truth. A place of meeting for worship is provided by the people themselves, either without or with some pecuniary assistance from the mission funds. After a time, when the first novelty of the movement has a little worn off and the preacher has made some acquaintance with those concerned, the missionary may with more advantage appear upon the scene.

Occasionally mission stations have been opened in certain towns before any movement at all has appeared, simply on the ground that the place is, as it were, of some strategic importance for reaching some new district of country; but this happens very rarely, and in almost all cases a new station is planted where for some reason a movement of inquiry has already begun. One may say, therefore, that the stage of evangelistic preaching usually leads on naturally to the stage of church planting. What takes place at one of these new centres is something like the following. After a native preacher has been in occupation for a few weeks or months, the foreign missionary arrives at the place, say, on a Saturday afternoon. He finds a native house or shop which has been rented for the purposes of Christian worship. A table and benches have been provided. There is usually a small room attached, in which the preacher lives, and which is given up for the missionary's occupation during the time of his visit. Sheets of red paper have been prepared, with appropriate inscriptions indicative of the uses of a place of worship, or of the elements of Christian teaching. A phrase equivalent to "Worship Hall," or "Gospel Hall," is written up over the doorway. If the place is one where a foreigner has seldom been seen before, a crowd of the neighbours or townspeople gathers immediately on the missionary's arrival. With the help of the native preacher he takes the opportunity of preaching to these people as

long as they care to listen, and this sometimes goes on for several hours. Usually the desire to see the foreigner is so keen that the crowd becomes a little tumultuous, and it sometimes seems as if it would be hopeless to hold quiet meetings for worship. But when evening falls curiosity has been partially satisfied, and the arrival of supper-time draws the people away and gives an interval of quiet. Later in the evening one and another of those in the neighbourhood who are already worshippers begin to gather, and presently the room or shop is filled with a quiet audience of persons who already know something of Christian truth. Most of these are provided with hymn-books and New Testaments, though only a few of them may be really able to read. Besides these, a number of on-lookers often come in. But they are now somewhat held in check by those who are already in possession, and stand quietly about the door to see and hear, without interrupting the work of the evening. We usually begin such meetings with singing and prayer, and perhaps read a portion of Scripture. Another diet of preaching begins, but this time it is not addressed to a purely heathen audience, but is designed rather for the instruction of those who have begun already to profess themselves Christians. When the preaching is over, we ask those present whether any of them wish to give in their names as applicants for baptism. Sometimes a list has been already prepared by the local preacher, but in any case it is well to ask the people to give their names anew, so that the missionary may be able to see and recognise them one by one. Generally there are a few whose minds are already made up, and who give their names without hesitation. Others who have been in the habit of attending worship but are not fully prepared to commit themselves to a public profession sometimes hang back. In each case we ask for name, surname, age and residence, and make a note of these particulars in a list to be

kept for future reference. On a first visit only a few names may be given in, or there may be as many as twenty or thirty. I have on a few occasions taken fifty or sixty. Sometimes a beginning is made at once in examining these applicants individually in regard to their knowledge of Christian truth. Questions are also put with regard to their families and their occupations, and an endeavour is made to ascertain whether they have already been making an open profession of Christianity amongst their own people, and whether they have been met at home with sympathy or opposition. This individual examination of the applicants often goes on till a late hour, and it is perhaps midnight before the meeting is finally brought to an end. When the last of the people have retired, the missionary and preacher, and perhaps one or two others, are left by themselves in the chapel, where they spend the night. Next morning, soon after daybreak, the Christians begin again to gather. Sometimes as early as five or six o'clock in the morning you can hear them singing hymns at an early gathering for prayer. As soon as breakfast is over, the work of examining applicants can be resumed, and this goes on till ten or eleven o'clock in the forenoon. It is well to take an opportunity as early as possible of consulting the preacher as to the names that have been given in. He is often able to give valuable information about individual cases, which guides one in the work of examination. If he is a man of experience and tact he is often able to point out those who have come from unworthy motives, or who have any selfish ends to serve, and can often give a helpful opinion as to which of the applicants have given more indication of real spiritual life and interest in the truth. With the assistance of such information as he gives, the more hopeful cases can be gone into with more minuteness, and if the list of applicants is a long one, it can, by a process of sifting, be reduced to manageable

dimensions. We have generally found it advantageous to conduct these examinations in public, although in some mission fields this work is done more privately. The public examination, with some drawbacks, has many advantages. The questions put, and the answers given, often give to all who are present an opportunity of hearing a large amount of useful teaching reduced to its most simple and elementary forms. The applicant, on the other hand, has an opportunity of giving his testimony with some degree of publicity, which is helpful for confirming his own resolution, and also for impressing the minds of others. Again, with a people like the Chinese, one cannot afford to forget that attempts may be made to deceive us, and when a man is speaking in the presence of those who know well his daily life and character he is less likely to pervert the truth. Sometimes, too, misapprehensions are brought to light in such a way as to give a favourable opportunity for correcting them there and then within the hearing of all. Of course, if any matters of a private nature are touched on, these can be reserved for after treatment. One manifest drawback to the system of public examination is that, where a large number of persons have to be examined in succession upon the elements of Christian truth, it is difficult to avoid falling into ruts and repeating the same questions, and so giving opportunity for formality in the replies. It is often a severe strain on the questioner's ingenuity to vary the line of examination with each applicant, while yet ensuring that the main outlines of Christian knowledge are covered in each case. Valuable assistance may often be got in such work by asking the native preacher to take his turn in conducting the examination. By ten or eleven o'clock it will usually be found that the worshippers are all assembled, and public worship may begin. This is conducted very much on the lines of an ordinary service at home, except that in preaching we use a larger freedom,

and often interrupt the course of our addresses by using the method of question and answer. This is very helpful to an audience who are not accustomed to listening to a continuous discourse, and the answers often serve to bring out the needs of the people so as to guide the preacher in his teaching. The service is usually over by twelve or one o'clock, and if the examination of applicants has not been completed already, it can now be continued. But it is often desirable at this stage to consult with the local preacher as to the immediate admission to baptism of any of those already examined. This is difficult and anxious work, and we hardly ever baptise any on a first visit; but when a second or third visit has been reached there will sometimes be found a few whose knowledge seems to be sufficient, and to whose character good testimony is borne by the preacher himself, or by others who may be consulted. Much of the future prosperity of the station will depend upon the character of those who are first baptised, and it is necessary to exercise the utmost caution at this stage. Those who are received as the first members of the church in a new place will for some time to come be naturally looked up to by others as the type and example of Christian life. Should their conduct be unsatisfactory, it will lower the tone of all, and we have seen congregations suffer for many years through the unworthy character of those who were their first members.

If some are selected for baptism, they are called in and spoken to in private with a view to deepening in their minds the sense of responsibility in regard to the step they are taking. Meantime worshippers from a distance have been cooking and eating their mid-day meal in the chapel or its neighbourhood, and by two or three o'clock all are ready for meeting again. Another service of praise and prayer with reading and preaching prepares the way for administration of baptism. It is always desirable in such cases to give suitable explanations of

the meaning and purpose of this ordinance, both for the guidance of the Christian worshippers themselves, and for the information of outside onlookers. Those who have been selected for baptism are asked to stand up in the presence of all, and a few questions are put to them in answer to which they give their assent to the great doctrines of the Christian faith, declaring that they have renounced all complicity in idolatry and other heathen customs, and are resolved by God's grace to worship and serve Him alone, professing themselves disciples of Jesus Christ, and acknowledging Him as their only Saviour. They are then asked to kneel down in the presence of God, and special prayer being offered in their behalf, they are named one by one in the presence of all, and baptised with water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In the circumstances of a young Church on heathen soil the outward aspects of such a service are extremely simple, and yet there is often a considerable impression made, even upon the minds of the onlookers, who have hitherto been strangers to Christian teaching. They almost invariably conduct themselves with perfect decorum, and offer no interruption to what is being done. At the worst, friendly remonstrance will almost invariably check any tendency to disturbance and secure quiet.

Some such scene as I have now described has been seen again and again on the mission field at the planting of the Church of Christ in some new centre. From the stage of purely evangelistic work the stage of the planting of the Church has thus been reached. A fresh proof has been seen that the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, in the turning into new channels of lives which hitherto have been under the unbroken power of heathenism. But the missionary's anxieties might almost be said only to begin when the church is thus planted. When one considers the lives that lie behind these new disciples, and the temptations and trials which lie around

and before them, one cannot look upon their first profession of the Christian faith without a strong feeling of sympathy, not unmixed with anxiety.

In the late afternoon of a busy day such as I have described, it is with a great sense of relief that one goes out from the crowded and heated place of meeting to enjoy the fresh air out of doors. Good use may sometimes be made of the time by accompanying some of the worshippers to their homes and so making fuller acquaintance with them in a pleasant and friendly way. Or one may visit someone who has been sick and unable to attend worship, and opportunities are often found for some brief preaching to those outside. In the evening a very happy and helpful time may be spent with those of the worshippers who live in the immediate neighbourhood. Prayer and conversation, with sometimes the examination of such applicants as may not have been reached in the course of the day, fills up the time. All missionaries have spent many laborious days of this kind, but can often look back to such scenes with great joy and thankfulness. It is from these small beginnings that there spring the Christian churches on which must rest the main burden of the evangelisation of a great heathen people. On Monday morning the missionary starts early for some other station, or for the mission centre, where other work awaits him.

It is often cause of no little anxiety to us that visits to these young churches cannot be very frequently repeated. There may be only one or two missionaries at the mission centre, distances are great and travelling is slow, and months may pass before it is possible to revisit a station. In the meantime the whole charge must remain in the hands of a native preacher, who has not only to preach the Gospel and conduct worship on the Lord's Day, but has to be the adviser of beginners in the Christian life, in all the perplexing circumstances and the many varied temptations which must inevitably arise.

"PEACE AND PLENTY"

A PREACHER AND SOME OF HIS CHILDREN

LECTURE VIII

THE THIRD STAGE OF MISSION WORK: ORGANISATION OF THE CHURCH, AND CULTURE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

I HAVE now described the work that falls to the lot of the missionary in passing through the stage of evangelistic preaching to that of the planting of the Christian church. At this point a new series of difficulties and anxieties begins. When next the station is visited one is anxious to know whether those baptised on the last occasion have made progress in their Christian life, and whether those of the inquirers who were not then received have now advanced so far as to justify their admission. Provision must also be made for the continuance of public worship, and it may not always be possible at first to send a preacher to a new station. Sometimes temporary arrangements must be made for carrying on the work, by occasional visits from preachers or private Christians at some neighbouring station. Often the house which had been secured by the local worshippers for their meetings is insufficient for the growing numbers who attend, or may not have been wisely selected with a view to permanent work. Or it may belong to some of themselves, and have been only lent at considerable inconvenience, and arrangements must be made as soon as possible for larger and more suitable accommodation. At this stage one at once comes upon the profoundly important question of the self-support of the native church. Rents are often low, and it would be easy for the missionary in many cases to promise at once the amount required to rent a suitable place, but by doing so he puts himself and the young

church in a false relation at the outset. It is better to teach them to make their own arrangements, the missionary guiding by advice from his larger experience of their probable requirements, and only in the last resort giving pecuniary help. At this stage a good native preacher can render invaluable assistance, if he can be allowed to live amongst the people for some weeks or months, to become thoroughly acquainted with them and their circumstances. He is usually a shrewd judge of character, and soon learns who are the men into whose hands the affairs of the young church can most safely be committed. At the same time, if he is himself an earnest and faithful preacher, his life amongst the people is a most valuable lesson to them. If he shows himself willing to submit to discomfort and annoyance, and to be more anxious for their good than for his own ease, he leads them on insensibly to a readiness to make efforts and sacrifices for the good of all. We have usually been able to carry on the work of a new station for some years in any Chinese house that might be available with comparatively slight alteration. A small room is set apart for the preacher to live in, and another, if possible, for the visiting missionaries. The central room is used as the place of worship, and a side-room next to it is set apart for the women of the congregation. To enable them to see and hear during public worship a large opening is made through the partition wall which divides their room from the central one. But in south China we are now reaching a stage when these primitive arrangements seem hardly sufficient. Where large numbers are in attendance, the ordinary Chinese house, such as can be most readily rented, affords insufficient accommodation, and we see with considerable regret that in future it will probably become increasingly necessary to build places of worship at an early stage.

When a new church has been formed, however few the

worshippers may be, it is never too soon to begin to teach them to contribute for the expenses of their own church. It is easier to begin early than to begin late. In former times missionaries were often tempted to do all that was necessary for these young congregations during the early years of work amongst them. The result was that it was looked upon by the native Church as only natural and right that the missionaries should meet all kinds of expenses connected with Christian worship. There have been cases in which the missionary not only provided the house where the Christians could meet for worship, but fitted it out with all necessary furniture, tables, chairs, benches and books, and even met their current expenditure for lights, tea and tobacco! This grew out of the native custom which was not unnaturally followed at the outset. In any shop, or school, or public building which one may enter, tea and a pipe are almost always found in readiness, and are offered to visitors, and for that reason the same arrangement was observed in evangelistic halls.

If the duty of giving for the support of Christian work is early put before the minds of the converts, their own consciences and feeling of self-respect naturally respond, and one is often surprised at how much may be done by poor people when their heart is in the matter. They readily learn the habit of making an offering at each of their meetings for worship, and they appoint some of their number to receive their monies, and keep an accurate account of income and expenditure. The sums handled may be small, but this arrangement gives scope for practical training in the honest management of public funds.

Probably in every new movement towards Christianity it will be found that there are one or two of the earliest worshippers who seem naturally fitted for taking the lead. It often becomes an anxious question whether they are at the same time those whose character is likely to exercise

a wholesome spiritual influence. If they are leaders only because before becoming Christians they were men of wealth or social standing, it will need some care and tact to prevent their giving the whole movement an unspiritual and worldly tone.

When this point is reached, the question becomes inevitable whether it is the missionary's duty to give the native church a formal organisation, and if so, which of all the forms of organisation now extant in the Church universal he is to select and recommend to them.

It is obviously impossible to sit down with these people, who have only begun their Christian course, and whose knowledge of Christian truth is for the most part very elementary, and ask them to choose a particular form of Church organisation. It cannot be made clear to them by explanation how the Church in the West has become divided into bodies organised some on the Episcopal, some on the Congregational, and some on the Presbyterian basis. Even if the distinction between these methods could be made clear to them, they have neither the knowledge of Scripture nor the experience of Church life which would enable them to form an intelligent opinion as to the respective merits of each system. Nor on the other hand is it possible to postpone indefinitely the whole subject. If no guidance is given them in organising the native church, you are practically giving them Congregationalism as their type of Church government. Besides, practical evils soon spring up which must be remedied without delay.

This problem is perhaps simpler in China than in some other mission fields. The Chinese have a natural instinct for self-government, and this instinct has been greatly strengthened by national custom. With them the family is the unit of social life; the father's authority over his sons and their children is the type of political organisation and civil government. The chief magistrate of a

district is spoken of as father and mother of its inhabitants, while the Emperor is regarded as the father of his people. Besides the recognition of the paternal principle as underlying political organisation, it has received a wide application in the department of local popular government. The political system of administration by magistrates who hold their appointments from the Imperial Government, while extremely complete and highly organised, is not in China the main guarantee for public peace and order. A great deal is left to the people themselves, and the principle of local popular government is widely practised. It is not, however, a machinery established by law; it is rather a natural growth which the law has wisely recognised, and of which it takes advantage to supplement its own deficiencies. Every village and every section of a town has its own head men, who stand between the body of the people and the officers of the law. These head men hold no government appointment. They are not even formally elected by the people whom they represent. They are simply men who, because of their years or ability or social position, have acquired influence and standing amongst their fellow-townsmen. Without formal election they come to be recognised as the authoritative heads of the people. In a village of a few hundred inhabitants there may be three or four such men. A large village is usually divided into several sections, each of which has its head men, and there may be ten or fifteen in all. They levy assessments upon the people for all public purposes of a local kind; they issue regulations from time to time for the preservation of order; they choose committees for the protection of growing crops; they regulate the markets and adjust disputes between members of the clan or inhabitants of the village to which they belong. In case of crime it is to them the magistrates look for the detection and arrest of the criminal. Failing

this, they are themselves made personally responsible, and may be punished by heavy fines, which in turn they levy from the people of the village. All this seems to be a natural outgrowth of the family government, and forms a system of local government very extensively practised in countries like China and India, in which we find a high civilisation which is based upon primitive customs and ideas.

Now, when the working of the same idea is transferred to the management of Church affairs, one cannot help feeling that our Presbyterian system is singularly adapted to it. The Chinese have really been Presbyterians before they became Christians; or to look at the matter from another point of view, the system of Presbytery, so far as it is sketched for us in the New Testament, is an adaptation, on the one hand, of the patriarchal arrangements of the Old Testament, and on the other, of the organisation of the guilds and friendly societies of the Roman Empire; and these in turn only represent universal principles of social order which grow up naturally among all primitive peoples. In short, Presbyterianism is not based upon any fine-spun ecclesiastical theory, nor does it rest mainly upon any theological basis. It derives at once its strength and elasticity from the fact that it is, after all, little more than an application to the affairs of the Church of the same principles of social equality and common sense which have formed the basis of the largest and most lasting of the political arrangements of great races.

Thus in dealing with a young Church recently planted in a heathen country we do not seek on theoretical grounds to establish a form of Church order and organisation which shall reflect in all its details the organisation of the Church at home. What we do is rather this: in view of practical needs which must be met, or practical evils which must be removed, we seek to make the best use

of the material which we have ready to our hand ; that is to say, among the earliest members of the native Church, as soon as it has reached sufficient dimensions, say when the membership has reached to twenty or thirty persons, we seek out those who seem to be best fitted, by natural ability and by Christian character, to become the leaders of the small community. In this choice we do not rely mainly upon our own judgment. We are guided in part by the preacher in charge, and he in turn forms his opinion not only from his own observation, but by consultation with the members of the local church. We explain to the people that while it has been our privilege to preach to them the Word of God, and to watch over the formation of the native Church, we shall look to them mainly for its proper government and growth. We teach them to feel that the responsibility of witnessing for the Gospel and bringing in others, and the responsibility for the orderly and proper conduct of Church affairs, rests with them. We therefore suggest to them to choose amongst themselves those whom they can best trust to act as their leaders and representatives, and in some such way as this we reach the stage of the first election and ordination of elders or deacons. It not infrequently happens that deacons are first appointed, both because money matters require attention from the earliest period and because the exercise of the office of deacon is often the best test and training for those who are afterwards called to bear the wider responsibilities of the eldership.

In some such way as has now been sketched we reach the elements of a Church organisation. The missionary visits the station from time to time as other engagements will allow, at intervals of two or three months, or at intervals of six or twelve months, according to the demands upon his time, and the distance of the station from the mission centre. The work of the congregation

is carried on by the native preacher and the local office-bearers; and when the missionary returns to visit the station he usually finds a number of new applicants for baptism, and finds that others with whom he has met on previous occasions have been making progress in knowledge and character. On these later visits his main work consists in preaching to the congregation for their instruction and growth in grace; dealing with the applicants for baptism, and also, with the help of the local elders, exercising some supervision over the life and conduct of those already admitted to the Church.

In regard to the admission of members to the Church by baptism, there is a difference of method, if not of principle, among missionaries. There are some who contend that everyone who desires baptism should be received, however little his knowledge of Christian truth may be, and however little knowledge the missionary may have of his life and character. They say that his willingness to profess himself a Christian and to receive Christian instruction sufficiently justifies his baptism; that the Church is the proper training place for Christians; and that the development of Christian knowledge and character, if not conversion itself, should rather follow than precede admission to the Church in baptism. This principle has been largely followed in southern India, and is being followed also in some parts of China. It is perhaps too soon to form an opinion founded upon actual experience as to what the ultimate results of this method will be. In our own mission we have not felt it right to follow it. Our practice has rather been to watch closely the growth in knowledge and character of those who present themselves as applicants for baptism, for a considerable length of time. We almost never baptise those with whom we meet for the first time. We have not fixed any definite period of probation, but in practice most of those whom we receive into the Church have been worshippers for one

or two years before they are baptised. In our choice of those whom we think it right to receive, we are guided partly by the degree of knowledge which they show in the examinations for baptism to which I have already referred. Perhaps one should say that we are guided less by the actual degree of knowledge attained than by the amount of progress shown between one visit and another; and in estimating the significance of the progress made, we are guided largely by the age and apparent capacities of the individual concerned. For example, when one meets with a candidate who is young and intellectually bright, especially if able to read and having good opportunities for learning, one requires a much higher standard of knowledge than in the case of old and dull people, who are uneducated and have few opportunities of receiving instruction. But we are guided in our decisions most of all by the testimony given by neighbours, and by the local preacher and elders, as to the home life of the candidates, and the reputation which they bear amongst their neighbours.

It is sometimes objected to this method that it seems to differ widely from the apostolic practice, and that the free admission of all who seek it resembles more the practice recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Now I admit frankly that it is not easy to justify clearly to one's mind the more cautious method by actual New Testament examples; but one feels that the argument from the New Testament must not be pressed too far, the circumstances being in many ways widely different. Apart from the question which might be raised as to the possession by the apostolic missionaries of the early Church of a special spiritual insight and divine guidance in their work, there are other elements which must be taken into account. The apostle Paul in his missionary journeys made a practice of beginning his work amongst the Jewish communities, and so far as his converts were drawn from

amongst them he was able to assume a large amount of knowledge of divine truth as taught in the Old Testament, and a spiritual preparation which is almost wholly lacking among those with whom we have to deal in the modern mission field. Again, the apostle, even in his longest journeys, was still dealing with those who were members of the same state with himself. Jew, Greek, Roman, were all alike under the control of the Roman Emperor, and the apostle went amongst them as one of themselves. In the modern mission it is inevitable that the missionary goes amongst his hearers, not only as the representative of a more spiritual religion than their own, but as the representative also of a higher civilisation and a more powerful political system. Unfortunately, these material advantages are more prominent than any thought of spiritual advantage in the eyes of most of our hearers. We have to beware, therefore, lest we should too hastily receive those who have neither any real desire for the knowledge of the truth nor any spiritual hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Whatever may be said on theoretical grounds, it seems to be the dictate of expediency, and also of a wider and deeper consideration of New Testament language, that we should exercise extreme care in the selection of the human material out of which we are to make the foundations of a Christian Church in a heathen country. It would be easy to add rapidly to the number of our converts, but a rapid growth in numbers would not necessarily mean a growth in real strength. Careful selection of those admitted to the Church, especially at the outset, with patient and careful teaching and training after their admission, seems to be the best guarantee for the healthy growth and permanence of the native Church.

With regard to the question of the apostolic practice in the administration of baptism, another remark may be made. Does the New Testament represent the apostles

as men who were infallible in their administration of the Church? Is it not evident that while they were men divinely taught they were at the same time subject to like passions with ourselves, and had to apply the divine teaching given them under many of the ordinary limitations of human life? It has been too often assumed that under the apostles we find the Church in a state of ideal purity and perfection; but is it not evident that the New Testament, with the same perfect frankness which makes parts of the Old a stumbling-block to modern readers, sets before us the apostolic administration, its growths, and their results, as subject to scrutiny in the light of the Lord's rule: "By their fruits ye shall know them?"

For example, the community of goods which was established for a short time in the Church at Jerusalem is classed by general consent among experiments that have failed. The Church in Corinth was the scene of gross disorders, not only in individual cases, but in its corporate life; disorders so gross that no modern mission which became the scene of such things could hope for toleration or pardon from its supporters. Even though the personal infallibility of the apostles in acts of administration had been guaranteed, it is evident that their control reached the numerous scattered Churches only very imperfectly. Their visits to the Churches were few and uncertain, and the whole of the Epistles represent the efforts which they made to supplement the lack of their continued personal rule.

We must therefore regard the early Church history with a watchful eye, not seeking to transfer all its features to the Church of our own time. Some of its chapters are for our warning rather than for our imitation, and all are to be read in the light of experience.

When the apostle Paul tells us that many walk who are enemies to the Cross of Christ, he must refer to

persons who were recognised as members of the Christian Church. But he is plainly speaking of persons who should never have been baptised at all, and it is evident that even in apostolic days the system of admission, whatever it was, was not wholly successful. It is not surprising, therefore, that we find that not long afterwards a very cautious method was pursued. In the "Teaching of the Twelve" we read: "Having first communicated these instructions, baptise into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The instructions referred to consist of the contents of the early part of the book, and the communicating of these instructions implies a considerable preparatory training. In the "Apostolic Constitutions,"[1] dating from the early Christian centuries, still more elaborate and cautious instructions are given. Thus we read: "Those that first come to the mystery of godliness, let them be brought to the bishop or to the presbyters by the deacons, and let them be examined as to the causes wherefore they come to the Word of the Lord; and let those that bring them inquire exactly about their character and give them their testimony. . . . If a maker of idols come, let him either leave off his employment, or let him be rejected. If one belonging to the theatre come, whether it be man or woman, or charioteer, or dueller, or racer, or player of prizes, or Olympic gamester, or one that plays on the pipe, on the lute, or on the harp at these games, or a dancing master, or a huckster, either let them leave off their employments, or let them be rejected. . . . He that is guilty of sins not to be named, a magician, an enchanter, an astrologer, a diviner, a user of magic verses, a juggler, a mountebank, one that makes amulets, a charmer, a soothsayer, a fortune-teller, an observer of palmistry, he that when he meets you observes defects of the eyes or feet of the birds or cats, or noises, or symbolical sounds; let these

[1] Book viii. chap. 32; see also Book vii. chap. 39.

be proved for some time, for this sort of wickedness is hard to be washed away; and if they leave off those practices let them be received; but if they will not agree to that let them be rejected. . . . Let him that follows the Gentile customs or Jewish fables either reform, or let him be rejected. If any one follows the sports of the theatre, their huntings or horse races or combats, either let him leave them off, or let him be rejected. Let him who is to be a catechumen be a catechumen for three years; but if anyone be diligent and has a good will to his business, let him be admitted, for it is not length of time but the course of life that is judged." These words describe very nearly the course that is pursued in our missions in south China, except that the period of three years is longer than the period of probation to which most of our applicants for baptism are subjected. This practice of great care in the selection of candidates for baptism is rather confirmed than otherwise by the example of the apostle Paul himself. It is often said that the apostolic practice was that of a very free admission to baptism of nearly all those who applied for it; but the apostle Paul, so far from baptising freely all applicants, tells us plainly that he himself administered baptism in very few cases indeed. This was no doubt partly due to the intensity with which he gave himself to matters to him of infinitely greater moment than the administration of sacraments, but it was no doubt also due in part to his recognition of the fact that his constant journeyings over wide fields of labour did not allow him those opportunities for close personal acquaintanceship, or for prolonged sympathetic teaching, which are required for the safe and useful administration of baptism as a rite by which new converts are admitted into the Church.

Those who advocate the free reception, at an early stage, and with little restriction, of applicants for baptism, sometimes put their argument in this form. They admit

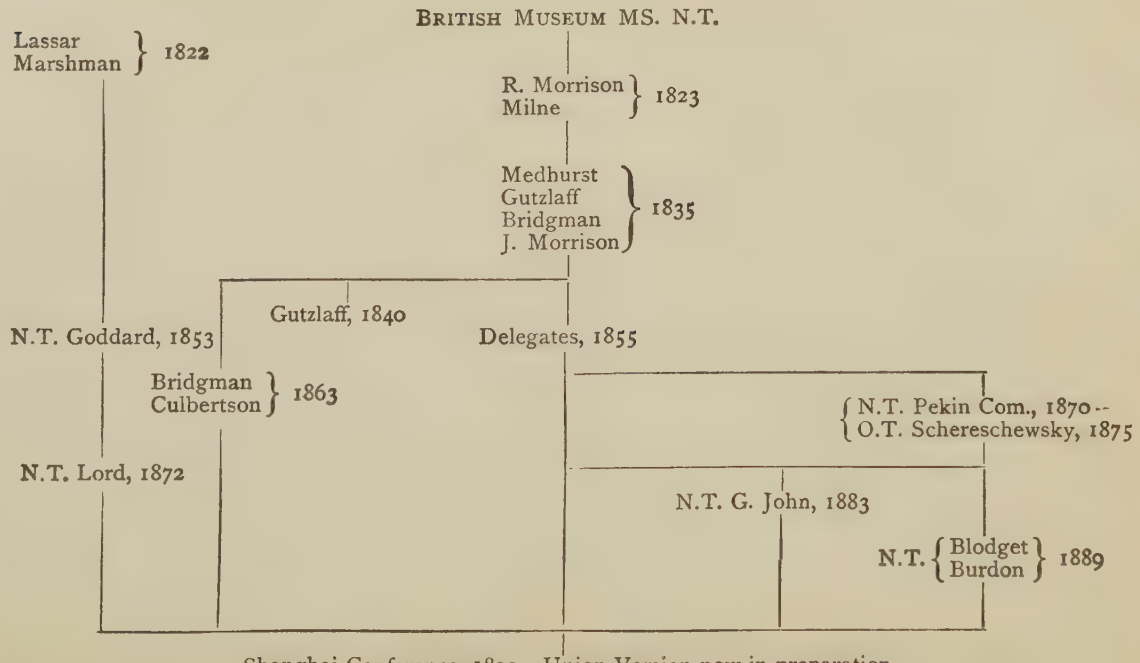
that many of the persons thus baptised are likely afterwards to fall away; but they contend that the numbers of those who remain faithful after being gathered in under this system are larger than those gathered in by the other. Suppose, they say, five thousand persons are baptised within a brief period, and that of these one, or even two, thousand should afterwards fall away, still you have gathered the harvest of three thousand satisfactory converts, while on the plan of cautious selection you might have received not more than a few hundreds. There is one obvious weakness in this line of argument; it assumes that you have gained a nett result of three thousand satisfactory converts, with no countervailing disadvantage. But it is forgotten that the one or two thousand who fall away are not merely a loss by deduction of their numbers from the nett result; they continue to move about in heathen society, living un-Christian lives, and yet are known by everyone to have been accepted as members of the Christian Church. They bring discredit upon the Christian name and repel many who, but for their disastrous example, might have become sincere and earnest converts. The Church works on the mass of heathen society by its example; but the force of its example must be enormously lessened where there are large numbers of persons who are known to have entered its membership and yet do not display in their lives a Christian spirit and character.

As in the world of nature weeds and tropic jungle grow apace, while great forest trees build themselves up by slow and imperceptible increase, so the new Church, which is re-creating by its life the elements around it, must take time for their assimilation. At no stage can work so far-reaching be rushed to a hasty end. On the contrary, time continually brings to light new needs, and fresh methods must be devised to meet them. After making provision for Christian worship and elementary instruction, and laying the foundations of a Church organisation, much

remains to be done in order to carry on from stage to stage the due culture of the Christian life that has been begun in an unkindly environment.

Foremost among the means to be used for this purpose may be mentioned the translation of the Scriptures. From the beginning of mission work in China much labour has been expended in this department, and the work is not yet nearly at an end. Many complete versions of the New Testament, and several of the whole Bible, have been made in different forms of the Chinese language. It is interesting to note that the first of these versions known to us was made, though not printed, by some unknown Catholic missionary at least as early as the seventeenth century. A copy of his work, made in Canton, was presented by a British merchant to Sir Hans Sloane, and afterwards deposited in the British Museum. There it attracted the attention of Robert Morrison on his appointment in 1807 as the first Protestant missionary to China. He began making a copy of it with his own hand, and afterwards procured the assistance of a Chinaman whom he found in London. This transcript he carried with him to Canton, and used as the basis of his work in beginning to translate the New Testament. He completed a version, first of the New Testament, and afterwards of the Old, which is a monument of persevering labour. It served a useful purpose in the early days of mission work in China; but on account of the disadvantages under which the work was executed, it was impossible that it should remain in permanent use, and it is now entirely laid aside; but it was the first of a series of efforts which have given us several Chinese versions of no little excellence. The relations of these will be best understood by reference to a diagram in which their dates and their dependence upon each other are set forth (see p. 208).

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF CHINESE VERSIONS OF SCRIPTURE.



The nature of any version of the Scriptures will be largely determined by the class of readers for whom it is intended. A translation may be for either of two purposes. It may be intended either (1) to give a substantially faithful presentation of the thoughts of Scripture to non-Christian readers, either with a direct view to their enlightenment and conversion, or for general apologetic purposes; or (2) to supply Christian readers with as faithful a text as can possibly be given, to form the basis of a minute and loving study of the niceties of expression and the minutiæ of distinctively Christian thought. Speaking broadly, one might say that the former object was the one which the earlier translators had in view. There was then no Christian Church in China, and the thought always present to a translator's mind was, necessarily and rightly, how to make the great facts of Christianity and the broad outlines of Christian thought most acceptable to a non-Christian reader. To disarm prejudice and receive a favourable hearing it was necessary to cultivate refinement of style, and the peculiarities of Christian teaching were sometimes sacrificed to the requirements of elegant style or of familiar idiom. It is to its happy meeting of these requirements that what is called the "Delegates' Version" owes its wide popularity among Chinese missions. Its style, from the Chinese point of view, is faultless; its narrative portions are clear and pleasant to read; the Psalms and Prophecies are appropriately rendered, though not accurately translated, in a measured and elegant rhythm; while the profounder discussions of the apostles are rendered with a general faithfulness, which retains a Chinese cast of expression, and avoids embarrassing a non-instructed reader with the subtler profundities of Christian theology and ethics. These are high merits, and they have rendered this version a valuable instrument for the evangelisation of China.

But for the second purpose of a translation these high

excellences assume a different aspect, and some of them become positive defects. On the one hand, the style of this version, though admirable for good scholars, is too high for even the more educated part of the membership of the Church ; on the other, its renderings, though faithful to the main lines of Christian teaching, are not so minutely exact as to lend themselves to detailed exegetical and expository treatment in the hands of Christian students and preachers.

The language problem in China is of such a complex kind that a version of the Scriptures for general use in all parts of the Empire must be written in the Book or Classical language, expressed in the native character. It is then quite suitable for use in every part of the country, and forms a common standard of appeal for the whole Chinese Church ; but the wide range of its use is secured at a heavy cost. The language in which it is embodied is a literary vehicle acquired only by scholars, and far removed from the mother-tongue of the people. Wherever it is read in public worship it must be submitted to a further process of translation. If read aloud as it stands on the printed page, it is not understood by the hearers. The reader, whose eye follows the printed text, must read from it a translation, usually extemporary, into the local vernacular of the people whom he is addressing. Thus the Bible in the classical form given it by scholars who have spent long toil on biblical translation, does not in that form reach the bulk of our Church members. Their Bible is the ever varying, often patched and bungled, rendering which is produced, anew and extempore, at every service or meeting which they attend. At its best it lacks faithfulness, force and permanence ; at its worst it becomes a bungled patchwork, in which the outlines of the meaning can hardly be discerned, and where life and spirit are nearly lost. The Bible in the book language is read by a few of the Chinese Christians, and is taught

in all Christian schools in southern China. It is invaluable as a basis for teaching, but the book language is not in any part of China the language of the people, and the Bible in this form can never be the people's Bible.

There is another large department of Scripture translation which was undertaken at a later stage. This is the rendering of the Bible into the local vernaculars of different parts of the Empire. These vernaculars are not usually written in any form, though they are the native tongues of all classes of the people, but the most widely extended of them, the so-called Mandarin dialect, can be written in Chinese characters, and a large native literature exists in this form. There is thus a written vernacular in northern and western China, where the Mandarin dialect is the spoken language of all classes of the people. A version of the Bible was accordingly made into this form of the Chinese language as early as the year 1860, and is used, almost to the exclusion of the Bible in classical style, over all the north and west of China. The vernaculars of Canton and Foochow have also been written by the Chinese in the native character, with certain modifications to adapt it to this purpose, and in these two vernaculars also there exist complete versions of the Old and New Testaments. There are also partial versions in some other of the local vernaculars, but, for reasons into which it is impossible to enter here, the native character is not well adapted for representing the spoken vernaculars, and many efforts have been made to find a more suitable method of writing them. Of these by far the most successful and the most widely used has been the Roman letter; that is to say, our own alphabet is applied on a strictly phonetic system to the representation of the sounds of spoken Chinese. The whole Bible has been translated into the vernacular of Amoy and Formosa in this form, and we have for many years been carrying out by degrees a translation into the

vernacular of Swatow. This form is usually spoken of as "Romanised vernacular," and its use is speedily growing, with the greatest possible advantage to the Christian communities, within which its use has been hitherto confined. Hainan, Canton, Swatow, the Hak-ka country, Amoy, Formosa, Foochow, Ningpo, Taichow, Shanghai, and the wide region of the Mandarin vernacular, all possess versions, more or less complete, of the Scriptures in their several vernaculars.

For two reasons the native book language presents extreme difficulty, which unfits it for universal popular use. In the first place, a large number of characters, their forms, sounds, meanings and usage, have to be acquired, and this is an enormously heavy tax upon the time and patience of ordinary people. And after the characters have become individually familiar there remains the still more difficult task of translating from the book language into the local vernacular. These reasons account for the smallness of the number of readers in China, which may be roughly estimated at not more than 10 per cent. of the men, and much less than 1 per cent. of the women. Many years of hard toil give to the ordinary Chinese student but little command of the book language, and little or no power of intelligent reading; but the use of the Romanised vernacular opens to all our people an easy channel for intelligent self-education. Instead of studying from two to four thousand complicated characters, representing what is even to them an unknown tongue, they have only to learn about twenty simple letters, and to practise their phonetic use in representing the sounds of their own mother-tongue as used in daily speech. So great is the simplification thus gained that men and women of sixty years of age have learned to read in this system without difficulty, and we estimate three months as a fair average time in which proficiency may be attained, even by the uneducated. We are setting

before the native Church as its aim that every member of it, men, women, and children, unless prevented by physical disability, should be able to read the Word of God for themselves. With the use of the Chinese book language this ideal will be impossible of attainment, but with the use of the Romanised vernacular it will not only be possible but easy to reach it.

The reading and writing of the vernacular in Roman letter is taught in all our schools along with the native written character or book language. Of those who can read the book language in Chinese characters, not one in twenty can write it with any facility or success. For this reason the Romanised vernacular is of great value in enabling those who learn it to express their own ideas in writing letters or essays or other compositions. Where it has been introduced, a large amount of correspondence is carried on among the Christians, and also between the native Christians and the missionaries. A signal advantage of this method is that those who use it express themselves naturally, writing what they would say: whereas those who use the book language write not so much what they wish to say as what they must say in the few fixed phrases known to them. Even those who write it well are greatly controlled, not only in expression but even in their thinking, by the stereotyped phrases of the highly artificial literary vehicle which they employ.

There is great hope for the growth of the native Church in intelligence and Christian culture in the freedom secured by the use of this simple and natural application of their mother-tongue.

Of course it is not enough to translate the Scriptures and other books into the book language and the Romanised vernaculars. After that has been done every effort must be made to bring this Christian literature into general use among the Christian people. Besides the elementary and higher schools for the children of the Church, and Sabbath

schools for old and young, in which the teaching of reading has an important place, two special expedients may be noted here.

Want of leisure is of course a principal difficulty for many of our people. The men are hard at work in their fields, or shops, or fishing boats, all day, and sometimes by night as well. The women are usually heavily burdened with household duties, which often include spinning and weaving for family use or for sale. In their scanty leisure they are too tired for active mental effort; and without guidance and without the habit of study, they can make but little use of the few opportunities for self-improvement that remain to them. We therefore have classes for adults which meet annually for a few weeks' study at the mission centre.

The men's class is held in the college in autumn, after the summer harvest is gathered in, when the men are comparatively at leisure. Those who wish to attend send in their names, and a list is made up of those who are to be admitted. Food and lodging is provided for them in the college, which is vacant at that season, the regular students being out on holiday. There are usually more applicants than we can receive, and a selection is made of those most likely to profit by the opportunity. They remain with us for six weeks, and for this reason the school has been conveniently named in Chinese fashion the "Forty Days School." It is taught by the missionaries, with or without native help. The main purpose of it is to teach all who attend to read in Romanised vernacular.

They also study some portion of Scripture, usually a Gospel, with some systematic view of Christian truth from a simple catechism, and some elementary geography. Those who profit most are encouraged to come back for a second season, and in the case of those who do so the results are very marked. Even in one season the progress made is very satisfactory.

A somewhat similar arrangement is made for the older women of the Church. A class for them is held in spring, and continues for two or three months. It is taught by the ladies of the mission, and the subjects studied are nearly the same as in the men's class. If any members of this class make good progress, and give promise of special fitness for employment in Church work, they are allowed to return home that they may approve themselves by their life and character among their own people. Further inquiry is afterwards made, and those whom we propose to employ are invited to return for further study. In the case of men, we ask them to enter the college and join a regular class of students, for whom subjects of study are fixed from time to time according to their ability and progress. In the case of women, special classes are formed from time to time, with a direct view to fitting those who attend them for employment as Bible-women, or evangelists, among the women of the Church at the out-stations, and their non-Christian neighbours.

A large department of work for the culture of the Christian life consists in the development, as the growth of the Church requires it, of a system of education in elementary, middle or high, and theological schools. In these provision is made both for "the Godly upbringing of the young," and for the training of a native ministry.

In the early days of the mission there were a few local schools where the children of Christian and non-Christian parents received an elementary education. For many years it was hardly possible to make such schools really successful. Sometimes it was impossible to find a Christian teacher, and the missionaries felt themselves obliged, with much reluctance, to employ men who were not even professing Christians. Later experience has fully justified this reluctance, and taught us that it is better to have no school than to have one taught by a native teacher who

is not a Christian. The popular regard for learning, real or nominal, leads to undue respect being shown to anyone who has the name of teacher, irrespective of his real character and attainments. Native preachers in charge of congregations were often, especially in the earlier years, men of little culture and education. Hence it frequently happened that the influence of the preacher was altogether outweighed by that of the non-Christian teacher who was, theoretically, under his direction.

It was ultimately found, therefore, that it was better to give up altogether the practice of employing as teachers men who were not Christians. This, however, raised a serious difficulty in the way of providing education for the Christian children. We regarded the preachers mainly as evangelists, whose duty it was to itinerate as widely as possible in the district surrounding their stations. It was hardly consistent with this duty that they should give much time to teaching in day schools. Besides, as I have said, while their character made them useful preachers to adults, their education was often not sufficient to make them successful teachers. To meet these difficulties we opened, in the year 1876, a boarding school at the mission centre in Swatow. We called it from the first the "middle school," but this more on account of the position which we meant it to occupy in the future than on account of the work done in it at the outset. Into this school we received about thirty boys drawn from the Christian congregations throughout the country, and gave them four years' education under a Christian teacher who was under our own direct supervision. Here, too, the experiment was made of employing a non-Christian teacher to assist in teaching the reading of native books and the writing of the native character; but here, too, experience soon showed the evil of employing a non-Christian teacher in a Christian school, even with the closest supervision. His presence and influence were

always felt to be positively hostile to the real aims of the school, and after a year's experiment we found it best to dispense with assistance of this kind. For some years the so-called "middle school" was compelled to give its pupils elementary instruction, but we gradually raised the standard of education, and as years went on aimed at having the elementary work done in congregational schools. Now that this school has been at work for twenty-three years the difficulty has been largely overcome. Many of our out-stations have now their own elementary schools under the care of a Christian teacher. In these schools boys receive from four to six years' elementary instruction. In the year 1881 a qualified teacher was sent out from home as a missionary specially instructed to give his whole time to educational work. Under his care much progress has been made, both in the elementary schools and in the middle school. Most of his own work is done in the latter, but he also regulates the teaching in the elementary schools, and examines all the pupils towards the end of each year. Those who stand well in the examination for the fourth year and upwards in the elementary schools may, when they have reached the full age of fifteen years, become candidates for admission to the middle school. For some years the number of candidates was not large, and we were obliged to sanction for the time a somewhat lower standard of qualification, but the standard has been gradually raised, and can now be strictly enforced. The middle school receives year by year a number of boys of good character who have had a thorough and carefully regulated elementary school course. They spend four years in the middle school, and at the end of that time are qualified for admission to the hospital as medical students, or to the college for training, with a view to becoming preachers and teachers.

In the elementary schools the children of non-Christian

parents are admitted if they are willing to conform to the course laid down, but the irregularity of their attendance makes their admission very unsatisfactory. To the middle school only the children of Christian parents or those who are under Christian guardianship are admitted. It is not required of these boys that they should have already made a personal profession of Christian faith, though usually a number of them have already done so. Many of them, though not all, have been baptised in infancy as the children of Christian parents, and most of those who pass through the middle school curriculum are received into the Church on their own profession before they leave the school.

The students received into the college consist of two classes. Some are men who became Christians after they were grown up, and have not had the advantage of an early Christian education. Most of these have been farmers, some boatmen or tradesmen, and are received into the college on good evidence being shown that they are men of real Christian character, who have some desire and capacity to serve the Church in evangelistic work. For these men the course of study is regulated from time to time, according to their abilities and progress, and for them we have not been able to draw up a fixed curriculum. The other class of students is drawn generally from the middle school, and consists of those who have received a Christian education from their childhood, and are in every way better qualified than the others for continuous higher study. They usually enter college at a considerably earlier age than the others, and we often send them out in the middle of their college course to teach for another year that they may gain experience, and not reach the end of their curriculum at too early an age. The regular course for these more advanced students occupies four years, during which time they read through the Chinese text of the whole Bible, practising translation

from the literary language into the vernacular, and making a more special study of selected books both from the Old Testament and the New. They also study Church history, the elements of systematic theology, keep up their knowledge of arithmetic, geography and history, receive some little instruction in physical science, and practise composition and the preparation of sermons. All parts of their educational course are conducted solely in Chinese. We have not thought it desirable, nor have our numbers rendered it possible, to give any instruction in English, and the time does not seem to have yet arrived for their study of Hebrew and Greek. The students are for the most part poor men, sometimes with parents more or less dependent upon them, and are not able to defray the cost of their own education. Bare maintenance is therefore given them by the mission during their college course. It amounts, in the case of an unmarried student, to three dollars (*i.e.* Mexican or silver dollars) per month, which at present rates of exchange is equivalent in money to about six shillings, though it represents more in purchasing power for native articles of food.

At the end of their college course these students are sent out, at first on probation, as teachers or preachers at out-stations, and begin to take their part in the regular work of the Church. In order to maintain the habit of study, we prescribe to them portions of Scripture and other books for private reading, calling them in to spend a few days with us at the mission centre twice a year for examination and instruction on the subjects prescribed, and for practical conference in regard to their work.

This educational system, including elementary, middle, and theological schools, has gradually been enlarged to meet the needs of the growing Church. In later years, through the efforts of the ladies of the mission, elementary schools for young girls have been opened at many of our stations. They are always taught by female teachers,

most of whom have been educated in the Girls' Boarding School at Swatow, which corresponds to the Middle School for boys.

The growth of the Church and the progress of the Christian life led in time to a further stage of Church organisation. Separate churches had been planted one by one, but as they multiplied it became necessary to secure by suitable means their unity and harmonious development.

This was done by the formation of a native presbytery. It was not formed to reproduce in China an ecclesiastical ideal, but to meet in the simplest manner the actual and pressing needs of the situation at which the work had arrived.

For many years the preachers had carried on their work under the direction of the missionaries, and received their support from mission funds. About the year 1880 some of our congregations had reached the stage of desiring to have a native minister ordained amongst them. From the beginning it has been made a condition of the ordination of native ministers that they should be wholly supported by their own people. To make it easier for congregations to reach this stage we have consented in some cases to the grouping together of two or three congregations, no one of which was strong enough to support its own minister, and which were near enough to each other to make it possible for one man to superintend all. This stage was reached about 1880, in a group of congregations in the north-east of our field, the principal of which was Iam-tsau, which you may remember as the village in which Mr Lechler, the German missionary, spent some of the laborious years of his early work in Tie-chiu.

We accordingly invited all the elders from the different

congregations to meet together with ourselves for the formation of a presbytery. We met in Swatow on the 8th June 1881. There were present five ordained missionaries from the Hok-lo and Hak-ka sections of the Swatow mission field, with one medical missionary who was also an elder, and thirteen native elders. Mr Smith was called to the chair, and after united worship, Mr Mackenzie, the next in seniority, gave some account of the founding of the Church in the Tie-chiu field, saying that there were then churches in twenty-three places with over 700 adult members. He went on to say that the regulations of the Church must be based on Scripture teaching, and that in former times the apostles of the Lord, in establishing churches in every place, forthwith appointed elders, who should join in caring for the affairs of the Church for the benefit of its members, and in spreading abroad the truth: and he therefore proposed that the meeting form itself into a presbytery for the care and teaching of those Christians who have learned the truth from the mission in Swatow. The following resolutions were then agreed to as indicating the nature and constitution of the presbytery:—

"1. The offices and government of the Church are distinct from those of the Empire, and each has its own function. In regard to worldly affairs, these belong of right to the province of civil government.

"2. According to the usual practice of presbyteries, each congregation should have a minister and one representative elder to discuss the affairs of the Church, but at present, inasmuch as the churches have not yet ministers, it will be sufficient that each should depute one representative elder to form a presbytery.

"3. For the present, those who have come from the

West to preach the truth and guide the Church, whether ordained ministers or elders, inasmuch as they all hold the office of the eldership, and have borne the responsibility of planting the Church, therefore ought to be united in the discussion of the business of the presbytery; but the native Church ought to be self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating; therefore in the future, when the Church becomes stronger, and its members more numerous, all matters must revert to the native office-bearers as their own charge, that they may lead the people of our native country to turn to the way of salvation."

These resolutions were agreed to by all present, and immediately thereafter the various sessions met separately and appointed representative elders. In this way the presbytery was formed which has continued until now to bear the responsibility of carrying on the united work of the Christian Church throughout the region. Committees were appointed to consider various matters of immediate urgency, and the desire of the congregations in the north-east for the ordination of their own minister was gratified not long afterwards. They chose from amongst our preachers Tan Khai-lin, the first convert of our mission in Tie-chiu, and he was ordained as their minister on the 20th of September 1882. He exercised his ministry to these four congregations till his death in the year 1892. The congregations then generously charged themselves with making some provision for the family of their late minister, who had earned the affection and esteem of all.

Other congregations followed from time to time in the same path of independence and self-support, with the best results. When arrangements now on foot are completed, there will be ten independent native pastorates,

TAN KHAI-LIN, FIRST CONVERT AND FIRST ORDAINED MINISTER, WITH HIS FAMILY

eight in the Hok-lo and two in the Hak-ka section, in each of which the minister is fully and suitably supported by the gifts of his own people.

This development, and the cultivation of the grace of liberality, have been steadily fostered by the wise and watchful care of the native presbytery. The growth of a sound financial system is an interesting and important chapter of our mission history. In many of our native families very little money passes through hand in the course of the year. They live for the most part on the produce of their own land, and have little money in their possession except after the sugar or rice harvest. As I have said, Chinese villages generally wear an aspect of poverty. The possessors of wealth are afraid to show it, and the bulk of the people are not wealthy. Indeed, many of the members of the native Church live habitually on a level that is little removed from actual poverty. When the seasons are good, and as long as they have health for their daily work, they live in fair comfort on the produce of their labour, but a time of sickness or a bad harvest may at any time bring them into serious difficulty. This may be regarded as the normal social status of the great mass of the population throughout China, and it is not substantially different in many other mission fields. Thus a difficulty has often been felt in the earlier stages of mission work. It has seemed impossible that people so poor should be able to maintain the ordinances of religion for themselves, or to give much assistance in its propagation. Missionaries in the early stages of their work have frequently been tempted to think that they must wait not only for the growth of the Christian Church, but also for the ingathering of what are called the better classes of society, before making any substantial effort to develop self-support in the native Church. The result has been to foster a dependent spirit amongst the converts. This tendency has been felt very acutely

in India, and to this day in many parts of it the difficulty has not been overcome. There, however, it is greatly intensified by the system of caste, which often deprives a Christian convert of his means of living. He has frequently been compelled to throw himself upon the care of the European missionary and depend upon him for employment and support. In China, as I have explained, this is not usually the case. There, there is no caste system, and there is very little of religious bigotry. There is often opposition, at the outset, to the first profession of Christian faith in a village or community, but when the first converts have been enabled to withstand this opposition for a time it usually dies away, and they are able to support themselves by continuing their former industries. But even in China it was at first felt to be unreasonable to expect the small body of Christian converts in their poverty to maintain Christian ordinances out of their own resources. In some missions, both in China and elsewhere, methods have been devised for giving pecuniary help to the native Church in its early stages, afterwards diminishing the amount of help given from year to year, until foreign help is entirely withdrawn, and the native Christian community is thrown upon its own resources. But this transition has in practice always been long delayed. The foreign help given has weakened the natural feeling of self-respect and desire for independence, and the native Church, instead of seeking to hasten the time when such help might be withdrawn, has attempted to postpone what it looked upon as the evil day as far as possible. In these circumstances, also, there has been a tendency to overpay native assistants. Working as servants of a European mission, they have, not unnaturally, expected to be paid at European rates. They have been tempted also to drift away from the native style of living, and so to get out of touch with native society, and also have lain open to the taunt that their only motive for

BLIND LADY, MOTHER OF TAN KHAI-LIN

teaching the foreigners' religion was that they were eating the foreigners' rice.

In south China the founders of our mission began to work on other and better lines. The duty of giving both to meet actual necessities and for the cultivation of the Christian graces of gratitude and liberality was early taught to the native Church. It was from the first set before them that it was their duty to support the ordinances of religion amongst themselves, and also to spread the Gospel amongst their fellow-countrymen. It was early recognised that even in a society where the bulk of the people are poor, a great deal can be done where there is willingness and Christian liberality. While mission funds were used to assist in the planting of the native Church, it was from the first made clear to them that such help was only temporary. As the Church grew in membership and the number of stations multiplied, the financial arrangements made gradually took a more definite shape. At present the members of every congregation and all who worship with them make offerings in various forms for all Church purposes. Local expenditure for lighting, cleaning, minor repairs, and so on, is met by offerings which are made at the ordinary meetings for worship on the Lord's Day. According to an ancient and kindly ecclesiastical usage, offerings made at meetings for the observance of the Lord's Supper are usually set apart for giving to the poor. Besides these gifts, a special contribution is made annually for the support of the native preachers. Every member of the Church, and many of those worshippers who have not yet been admitted to it, is asked near the beginning of the year to say how much he proposes to contribute during its currency to this fund. These contributions are afterwards paid in as money comes to hand. There is still a fourth general fund, partly made up of contributions promised in advance, partly from occasional offerings put into a box

which is placed in the churches for the purpose of receiving them. This is a mission fund, and is expended in the support of native evangelists in out-lying parts of the field. At the end of the Chinese year all these accounts are closed, and a statement of them is publicly made to the congregation. The whole contribution of the congregation for the support of preachers, and the contribution towards the mission fund, is then transmitted to Swatow, where it is received by a general treasurer appointed by the native presbytery, with whom is associated one of the foreign missionaries. One of these co-treasurers is intrusted with the money received, while the other keeps an accurate account of it, and together they report to the annual meeting of presbytery in spring.

The native preachers are, in the first instance, in the employment of the mission, and their monthly salaries are paid directly from mission funds by the missionary who acts as general treasurer. But when the presbytery meets in spring and receives the report of the native contributions towards the support of the preachers, it votes the sum received on this account to be paid over to the mission treasurer to meet the advances made by him. In this way about 50 per cent. of the mission's expenditure on the support of native preachers is repaid by the native contributions. Some congregations send in to the fund as much as they receive from it, while others contribute less, according to their numbers and ability. The presbytery watches over the amounts contributed, and by special deputations appointed from time to time urges the duty of Christian liberality upon the people. In case of any marked decline or failure to advance in any particular congregation, special inquiry is made and the congregation is urged to make progress.

This method of meeting the support of preachers leads on easily and naturally to the next stage, in which the congregation attains to independence and self-support.

In our mission it was made a rule from the first that no native minister should be ordained except where there was already a native congregation prepared to undertake his entire support. The only exception to this principle has been that in the case of smaller congregations a few of these were grouped together and allowed to combine in calling one minister to the joint charge of the group. This, of course, could only be done in the case of congregations at no great distance from each other, so that the pastoral supervision of the group could be efficiently carried on. When a congregation desires to call a minister, its first step is to approach the presbytery with an expression of its desire, and on assurance that it had already contributed the funds necessary to meet the entire expense, the presbytery appoints a deputation of inquiry, who are instructed to ascertain that the congregation is harmonious and earnest in its desire for the ordination of a minister, and that it has not only promised the amount necessary for his support, but has already paid one year's salary into the treasurer's hands in advance. On the report of this deputation, the presbytery having satisfied itself that all requirements have been met, then sanctions its proceeding to call a minister.

The amount to be given as salary is determined by the congregation, subject to the review and approval of the presbytery. In this way the amount given is regulated by native standards, and the foreign missionaries are spared the somewhat invidious task of determining the amount to be given. The pastorate is placed from the beginning on an independent footing. No support is derived from mission funds, and no direct control over the congregation or its minister is exercised by the missionaries. They act only through the native presbytery, in which they are associated with a considerable body of native elders and ministers, by whom, indeed, the foreign missionaries would be at any time outvoted. But while

in the native presbytery votes have often been taken upon a large variety of matters, the division has never been between natives on the one hand and foreigners on the other. In all our votes natives and foreigners have been found on both sides ; and while the natives exercise full independence of judgment and action, they have at the same time always shown themselves abundantly ready to give all due weight to the opinion of the missionaries, who numerically form but a small minority of the presbytery. We have thus been able to escape in our churches in south China any antagonism between the foreign and the native elements. The experience of some other missions, both in China and elsewhere, has not always been so fortunate. Where the native Church has been kept too long in pupilage its natural independence has been allowed to die out, and all problems connected with the planting of the Church have been left to be dealt with by the unaided efforts of the foreign missionaries. On the other hand, when an effort has been made to introduce a more healthy condition of Church life, difficult questions have arisen. The native Church has become accustomed to lean upon the support of mission funds, and has had no experience or training in the management of its own affairs. The funds used in Church work having come wholly from foreign sources, the missionaries have rightly been accustomed to exercise the entire control over them. A withdrawal of foreign funds seems to the native Church to indicate a lack of sympathy and generosity, while the missionaries, on the other hand, have naturally become somewhat unwilling to allow the sole control of Church matters to pass out of their own hands into the hands of natives who have had no opportunity of showing any capacity for wielding it. The stage of transition from the old regime to the new thus becomes so difficult that it has been in many cases indefinitely postponed, and in others has been the cause of misunderstandings and heart-

burnings which have for a length of time seriously injured the work of the mission.

Under the system which I have described there can hardly be said to be a transition stage at all. From the beginning the self-support and the independence of the native Church have been looked forward to on both sides as the natural and normal condition of affairs. Congregations in their early years have received all the help from foreign funds and the guidance of the foreign missionaries which their necessities required; at the same time they have from the beginning been making an effort to meet those necessities out of their own resources, and have been gradually rising step by step towards the position of self-support. During the process a body of workers, consisting of elders, preachers and native ministers, have been trained by experience in the conduct of Church work. As soon as a congregation is able to stand alone, and makes the necessary effort for the support of its own minister, all its affairs pass naturally into native hands. The missionaries have meantime acquired confidence in their native fellow-workers, their own work has been developing in other directions, and they are more than willing to be relieved to a large extent of the care of congregations which no longer require their continual supervision. It is usual in such circumstances to maintain such friendly relations with the native ministers and office-bearers that, even where complete independence has been established, friendly advice and guidance can be given without any assumption of official authority. The missionaries, having a seat in the native presbytery, have ample opportunities of influencing the action of the native Church, while yet congregations which have reached the footing of self-support do not feel themselves under any restraint or unnecessary obligation, and they learn to look to the presbytery, in which the native element predominates, as the only authority which officially controls their affairs.

The independence of the native Church becomes a reality, and it is established by easy steps, in which no awkward and embarrassing stage of transition requires to be passed through.

In discussing the planting and organisation of the native Church, I have assumed from the beginning the employment of native preachers, as a natural and necessary method of mission work. Perhaps, however, this should not be taken for granted. The question has often been raised whether members of the native Church should be formally employed as preachers at all, and also whether when so employed they ought to any extent to be supported by the aid of foreign funds. It is sometimes said that wherever a Christian Church has been planted, however small its numbers, it will be found to contain in itself the necessary elements for its own instruction and edification. It is asserted, chiefly on theoretical grounds, that every Christian community has necessarily within itself the presence and the gifts of the Holy Spirit; that these are the real bases for the healthy development of Church life, and that only harm is done by the appointment of men officially charged with the preaching of the Gospel. It is further said that to aid in the employment of such preachers by the use of funds drawn from the givings of Christian people in other lands must necessarily weaken the life of the native Church, and lead to the neglect and ultimate loss of its own spiritual gifts. It appears to me that this contention is neither justified by any right reading of Scripture nor by the results of experience. It is certainly a fundamental Christian principle that the strong should help the weak, and the principle is largely acted upon to great advantage in our own Church life at home. In Scotland, at least, and notably in the Free Church, many congregations are maintained in poor districts by the assistance given by larger and wealthier congregations elsewhere. There seems no reason

why the action of this principle should be restricted by limits of nationality and colour. The accumulated energy of spiritual life, and the wealth of the Christian Church where it has been long established, may well be drawn upon, not only for its own support within the bounds of one country, but also to foster the planting of the Gospel in new regions in other lands. Where the attempt has been made to plant congregations on the mission field, and leave them for years to their own resources for mutual edification and instruction, the result has often been to produce a Church which remains for years on low levels of spiritual life, without making any substantial advance in Christian intelligence and knowledge of divine truth. Where, on the other hand, preachers with more or less preparatory training and instruction have been appointed to labour in such young Churches, even though supported by funds drawn from other sources, the result has been that by their teaching and example they have developed among the members of the Church a more intelligent understanding of what their Christian calling is. They have enabled them to rise to higher levels of attainment, and have in every way fostered and strengthened Christian life amongst them.

Two dangers have to be guarded against. On the one hand, no recent convert should be hastily employed in any office to which payment is attached. On the other, help given in the maintenance of preachers at new stations must never be given in such a way as to check the efforts of the people, either in the spread of the Gospel among their neighbours, or in the support of the ministry of the Word among themselves. But with these precautions there is both room and need for the help that may be given by the older Churches to those newly planted on the mission field.

There is a real danger also that Church organisation may be pushed too far. In all such work it is needful to

remember that with varieties of circumstance there may very well be "differences of administrations." The only essential is that there must always be present the "One Spirit." Where He is and works all will go well. But His free working can only be enjoyed if we remember that the planting of the Church and its nurture is a work to be touched only with careful and reverent hands. We are not "pegging out a claim" on Eastern soil for a Western sect. We are not in China to fit together mechanically a reduced copy of the forms in which the course of history has moulded the Churches of our birth. We are not there to translate into Chinese the Westminster Confession of Faith, or the Thirty-nine Articles, or the Heidelberg Catechism. It is our happier lot to lead Christ's people there to the simplest and most natural exercise of their ordered liberty; and to follow with them the Divine Spirit whose working is always new and free, in the sure faith that He will Himself shape aright his Church, in the life of holiness and by the law of love.

LECTURE IX

GROWTH AND CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH

Part I.—Numerical Growth and the Heathen Background

THE numerical growth of the native Church in China was for many years extremely slow. Protestant missions there date from the landing of Robert Morrison in 1807. But in the year 1843 there were only six communicants connected with Protestant missions. In 1853 there were 350; in 1865, 2000; in 1876, 13,000; in 1886, 28,000; in 1889, 37,000; in 1893, 55,000; and at present there are between 80,000 and 90,000 communicants. The rate of increase, though slow indeed in the early years, has been rising rapidly in the later. Calculations are sometimes made by the critics of missions as to the number of converts gathered in proportion to the number of missionaries employed, and to the cost of the missions. A recent traveller in China announced that he had formed a low opinion of the prospects of missions there, and presented a calculation to the effect that the harvest reaped by the missionaries might be described as "amounting to a fraction more than two Chinamen per missionary per annum."

Calculations of this kind are of no value from any point of view. They belong to the dark ages of the end of last century, when men did not know what missions are. But now the man of average education is expected to know better. Curiously, the outside amateur seems always to think of the missionary as engaged in "making converts." The truth is, that most missionaries are engaged, for the most part, not so much in "making

converts," as in training and organising bodies of converts already made. The universal testimony of missionaries is that converts are made by the native Christians.

One man gives himself to healing the sick, and the doctor who sees his 50 or 100 patients daily, nearly all uninstructed heathen, has little time for "making converts." Another gives nine-tenths of his time to school work, or to the training of preachers; another gives a large proportion of it to translation or other literary work. This must be done in order to give the people the Scriptures, so that the converts may have an intelligent knowledge of the religion which they profess. So also text-books for school and college use are provided. All this is needed not only for the immediate wants of the converts, but also to reach readers outside of mission circles. We have now hundreds of books of all sorts and sizes, and in various languages of China: translations of Scripture, commentaries, treatises on theology, on mental philosophy, chemistry, astronomy, geometry, algebra, law, anatomy, physiology, materia medica, midwifery, Chinese and foreign history and geography, essays on religious topics, treatises on native religions, on the methods of Western civilisation, newspapers and periodicals, both religious and general, etc., etc. These have a large circulation, and find thousands of readers.

Is this voluminous Christian literature, much of it of excellent quality, not to be reckoned as part of the missionaries' "harvest"? Again, consider the time and labour spent in negotiating for sites or buildings, or planning and building churches, schools, hospitals, dwelling-houses, and all the brick and mortar requirement of a successful and permanent work. Is all that to be left out of the account? Moreover, as the result of what has been done, there is over large parts of China a friendlier feeling to the missionaries and a better understanding of their aim than before. This exists among the

people to a far larger extent than is generally known, notwithstanding the calculated hostility of the literary and official class, the champions of privilege and caste, who are the natural foes of light and individual liberty.

Now apart from all questions about "converts," all this represents a "harvest" of enormous amount and of quite unspeakable value.

Missionaries give, no doubt, a good deal of time to open-air preaching and to individual dealing, seeking in these and other ways to "make converts." But every wise missionary, if the supposition be allowed, will say that his converts are made by the native Christians. Progress at first is always slow, for the very reason that there are as yet no native Christians. But as soon as a few are gathered they begin by word and example to bring in others, and it is usually as much as the missionary can do to keep pace with the examination and training of the inquirers brought to him by the native Christians. To suppose that there is any direct causal ratio between the number of the missionaries and the number of "converts," is to mistake the whole situation. Whether the critic's figures are real or imaginary does not appear, and it really does not matter. He gets the number of missionaries, then gets, one knows not how, a number which he takes to be the number of converts per annum. Then he divides the one by the other and demonstrates! He might just as well take the height of the barometer and divide by the latitude! The result has no significance. By taking all the missionaries, and only the registered "converts," *i.e.* only communicants, by mixing old and new missions, evangelistic, educational and medical, all in one, he succeeds in combining all the faults by which the figures of rash statisticians can be vitiated.

He includes missions only newly begun, and missionaries of whom many are only learning to speak. On the other

hand, he omits multitudes of people who are under instruction, who are eager to be baptised, but whose acceptance is delayed by the prudence of the missionaries. To all intents and purposes many of these are, in the common acceptation of the term, "Christians" already. and might well be reckoned as "converts." Thus by a double error his ratio comes out vitiated in every possible way. Science is never advanced by misinterpreted figures worked through a meaningless calculation.

Something like the truth may be got by taking a representative case. Take the actual case of a missionary who came out twenty years ago. A year and a half passed before his first baptism of a "convert." This time was spent chiefly in learning the language. Thereafter the annual numbers baptised by him ran as follows:—First year 24, next 42, then 54, then 38, then 38; or an average over the first five active years of 39 per annum. This is an average case, and larger figures might often be found. In most parts of the older mission fields in China it would be easy for the missionaries, if regardless of quality, to add to their membership at the rate of hundreds per missionary per annum. A comparatively low rate of increase only shows the prudence of the missionaries. Most missionaries refuse more than they baptise every year.

If one were to follow this futile method of calculation of the number of converts gathered as the harvest per missionary per annum, we should find the rate considerably higher, when rightly estimated, than two per missionary. After making deductions for missionaries invalided or on furlough, and for those newly arrived who are still occupied in learning the language, but making none for missionaries occupied wholly in medical, literary, or educational work, I find, on a rough calculation for the thirteen years between 1876 and 1889, that the so-called harvest per missionary gives an average of

about fourteen converts per missionary yearly. No doubt the addition of fourteen members in twelve months is not a large achievement taken by itself, although even if that were all, a man might spend his life in less profitable ways. But when you consider that each of those fourteen becomes in turn himself an influence upon the native society round about him, and, on the other hand, that the missionary's work has told in innumerable other directions as well, the sum of his success begins to look somewhat larger. Even on the score of numbers another item should have been taken into the calculation. The dead, whom we mournfully deduct from our tables of statistics, should, when we estimate our harvest, be counted. Those who die in the Lord are not to be reckoned as loss to the Christian cause, but as clear, complete, and final gain. How many of the Christian converts died during the thirteen years referred to, I have not the means of estimating, but if these be added to the result, the number of fourteen additions should be perhaps doubled. The truth is, that if we are to look for a law of increase, it will be found that the increase of the Church's membership during any period is not proportional to the number of missionaries at work, but rather to the number of natives who are already members of it. For the Church does not grow by the accretion of individual units added to it by labourers who stand outside. It grows as a plant grows, by an inward process of multiplication, acting at innumerable points on the world around it, and absorbing what lies outside into itself by a process of vital incorporation. I have made an experiment in indicating the growth of Christian Churches upon mission fields by the method of a diagram commonly used in physical science to represent processes of change. Taking equal lengths along a horizontal line to represent years, and equal vertical lengths to represent numbers of communicants, it is possible to lay down a curve which represents at

once to the eye not only the growth of the Church at different times, but the variations in the rate of growth from year to year. By this means the interesting law is made visible to the eye that a new Church grows slowly for many of its early years, because the number of its members who are themselves the ultimate condition of growth is still small; but as that number increases, the rate of growth tends to increase with it; and the curve which represents the result, which for years at the outset is a flat curve remaining nearly parallel with the base line, tends to rise more and more sharply upwards as it is prolonged with the increasing years.

With regard to the Swatow district itself which I have taken as a specimen of mission work, the number of communicants at the end of 1899 was 2606, 321 having been added during the year, though taking deaths and other removals into account, there was a nett increase of only 230. In addition to these communicants we had on our rolls, in all the congregations under our care, 152 members under suspension. There was also a membership of baptised children amounting to 1195. These members of the Church are distributed into about eighty congregations, most of which are cared for by native preachers under the superintendence of the foreign missionaries, who visit them as time permits. There are seven native pastorates, to which I have already referred. These are under the care of native ministers, supported entirely by the givings of their own congregations, and exercise their own discipline by native sessions. Taking the contributions of the native Church as another test of the earnestness and vigour of their Christian life, I have laid down alongside of the curve of membership a similar curve to indicate the rate of giving. It also tends steadily to rise, and stands at present at about three (Mexican) dollars and a quarter, which for practical purposes may be interpreted as the equivalent of £3, 5s. per member per annum.

When the question is asked, "What is the character of the Christian converts in China?" it is necessary first to clear our ideas on some points. For one thing, it is often assumed that there are only two possible answers to this question, and that the converts must be either angels or shams. We who know them do not believe that they are either. You must first consider what the standard of comparison is to be. Shall we compare them with Christians in this country with generations of Christian life behind them, and surrounded by every influence that can strengthen and help forward character and attainment? One sometimes hears the answer given that the converts on the mission field are as good Christians as the average membership of our Churches at home. In one sense I believe the assertion can be justified, but the comparison is essentially unfair. Here you have the ripe fruits of a Christianity which was planted more than a thousand years ago. The Word of God has been among you all these Christian centuries. You have in every part of the country a highly trained ministry, a gifted and devoted eldership, and a whole army of Christian workers of all ranks. You work in the atmosphere of a Christian society, and under a settled Christian government. You have an immense and varied Christian literature, and notwithstanding all defects and drawbacks, you have on your side a weight of Christian tradition and a wealth of Christian example. Under such circumstances and in such an atmosphere, what are we not entitled to expect of those who bear the Christian name? What justice is there, or what reasonableness, in demanding as a test of genuineness the same degree of attainment on the part of Christian people, many of them uneducated, who are only just emerging from the deadness and insensibility of heathenism? With all our advantages and opportunities at home, let us remember the ghastly imperfections of our Christian life; the dishonesties of trade; the jealousies and rivalries

of Churches; and the selfishness of social life. I am bound to say that in all my experience of misson work, and in meditation upon it, the one discouraging thought that sometimes comes over me is this: "Are we working in China only to found there a Christian society, which, a thousand years hence, will be no better than our own?"

Then, on the other hand, consider the conditions under which the Christian life is lived in China. There, as I have said to you before, everything is hostile to it. It is striking its roots in an uncongenial soil, and breathes a polluted air. It may justly claim for itself the beautiful emblem so happily seized, though so poorly justified, by Buddhism—the emblem of the lotus. It roots itself in rotten mud, thrusts up the spears of its leaves and blossoms through the foul and stagnant water, and lifts its spotless petals over all, holding them up pure, stainless, and fragrant, in the face of a burning and pitiless sun. So it is with the Christian life in China. Its existence there is a continuous miracle of life, of life more abundant.

And if you are to judge it you must judge it with reference to its surroundings. You must not compare it with Christian life at home, but with the heathen life around it out of which it has lifted itself, and against whose every influence it maintains continual protest, and with which it wages victorious war.

What, then, is the moral state of the heathen people among whom the mission Church is planted? I have tried to give you a slight view of their history, their literature, religion and social life, but it is no easy matter to give a just appreciation of the outcome of all these things in the daily life of the people.

In estimating the moral condition of any people it is necessary to discriminate clearly what is really moral in thought and conduct from what is matter of convention or national temperament. Actions which, in a civilisation like our own, have a definite moral significance, may have

none in a country like China. In analysing our own life and manners it is not always easy to say how much of it all rests really on a moral basis; how much is due to habit and circumstance, and how much to positive moral motive. The savages of Polynesia or Central Africa occupy one level; the old civilisation of China another; and our own highly complex state of society a third. If we apply the same standard of judgment to all three, or even affix to the same actions the same interpretations, nothing but confusion and misunderstanding can result. For a people to live by hereditary habit below the stage at which certain moral distinctions emerge, is one thing; but for a people who have reached these standards afterwards consciously to depart from them, or unconsciously to lapse from them, is quite another. Defects of individual character or conduct which might have a grave moral significance in one state of society, may argue in another only a *non*-moral but not necessarily *im*-moral coarseness of natural fibre, and in another still may be due only to the dulness or the simplicity of a still dormant moral nature.

Keeping these distinctions in view, we must estimate the attainments of the people partly by the standards set forth in their authoritative literature and recognised by popular opinion. The higher these are, the higher must be the grade to which we assign them in regard to questions of moral character; but we must also in these circumstances estimate by a stricter standard the prevalent characteristics of the individual, and we must condemn the more severely their practical departures from their own code.

The code in China is pure and high, and it is wide enough to afford ample material for judging actual life.

Confucius was asked by Tsze Kung, "Is there one word which may serve as a rule to practice for all one's life?" Confucius replied, "Is not reciprocity such a

word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others." This utterance deserves much of the praise which has been bestowed upon it, but it is unjustifiable to represent it as equivalent to our Lord's golden rule. It must be estimated in the light of other utterances which explain more fully the speaker's meaning. On another occasion some one asked Confucius, "What do you say concerning the principle that injury should be recompensed with kindness?" To which he replied: "With what, then, will you recompense kindness? Recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness." One can see from these words how far Confucius was from the golden rule. He was outstripped in this, as in some other lines of thought, by the old Taoist Lau-tsze. In his book of "The Absolute and the Actual" he says: "It is the way of the Tao to recompense injury with kindness." Whether the question about kindness was asked of Confucius with direct reference to this passage is uncertain. What is clear is that the idea already taught by Lau-tsze, when presented to Confucius, was rejected as too high and fine for this world.

There is a beautiful expression in which Mencius says, "Benevolence is man's peaceful home; righteousness is his straight path. Alas, for those who leave the peaceful home untenanted, and the straight path untrod!" But the "alas" with which the saying is weighted must be uttered with double emphasis when we remember that in China those who leave the "home" and the "path" of man untenanted and untrod are practically the whole body of the people, high and low.

It would be wrong to say that there is no benevolence in China. The word is everywhere. In streets, temples, public buildings, and mercantile firms, it is used continually as an element in the style or name by which they are known. Every man who has younger brothers or friends is styled "benevolent brother," in every letter he

receives from them. Every magistrate whose cruel injustice makes the people tremble to approach him is styled "benevolent excellency" by his petitioners. More than this, you find here and there refuges for lepers; foundling orphanages, chiefly for little girls cast out by their parents, boys being too valuable to be thrown away; homes and almshouses for the aged and very poor; hospitals, dispensaries and burial societies, and I have even seen the rudiments of a lifeboat system in use on the Yang-tsze. In times of flood or famine large contributions are made in relief of the needy, and the lines of beggars exposing their often self-inflicted sores and clamouring for alms at the gates of great cities, or at shop doors in their streets, seem to point to the existence of a good deal of practical benevolence. The list sounds well, and no doubt a certain amount of good is done by these institutions, but they are few and inefficient. They bear an infinitesimally small ratio to the great masses of needy sufferers in the Empire, and multitudes must die annually from want and disease, helpless and forgotten. The only concern of those who see their need is that, die where they may or can, they shall not die at their doors. The localised responsibility in cases of unexpected death which is secured by the Chinese system of local government, makes everyone dread the appearance of a sick or dying beggar in his neighbourhood. However helpless and forlorn he may be while the breath still lingers in his body, his death at the doors of any household may bring down on them a whole army of unknown and fictitious relatives eager to claim the privilege of avenging his death by claiming from those at whose doors he is found, pecuniary compensation for his loss. If circumstances prevent a claim of this kind, no one will help him while alive, nor bury him when dead, lest by evincing any concern about him they should be involved in the expenses of his burial, and possibly in a criminal charge. The

body may lie exposed till perforce the magistrates intervene, and remove it at the least possible expense.

In the distribution of famine relief, as in the distribution of all other public funds, the officials, high and low, through whose hands it passes, are constantly guilty of dishonesty and mal-administration. No European would contribute to such funds, unless assured that the distribution would be conducted by the missionaries or other foreigners, so as to ensure the help reaching those for whom it is intended, and being saved from the rapacity and peculations of the mandarins.

In regard to the practical existence of the virtue of benevolence, I can only instance further the hideous ingenuity which surrounds the whole judicial system with an elaborate variety of brutal tortures. Not only condemned criminals, but prisoners on their trial, and witnesses under examination, are daily tortured with every refinement of cruelty. Beating with bamboos on face, feet, thighs and body; hanging up by cords tied round hands, feet or fingers, for long periods, while the cords cut into the flesh, and every joint is stretched as on the rack; crushing the joints; burning, slicing, hammering in the ankle bones—these are only a few items of the ghastly list of means used to extract evidence from reluctant witnesses or confessions from obstinate offenders. Strangulation and beheading are the two methods of inflicting capital punishment mercifully, but in many cases crucifixion, gradually cutting to pieces, burying alive, hanging up by the chin in a cage till the victim dies of starvation, thirst and pain, are either prescribed by law or inflicted at the pleasure of the magistrate. While these are the brutalities of the regular machinery of the law, you may imagine that the people better the instruction in their private quarrels and in their revenges, which, in a vast multitude of cases, anticipate or take the place of legal procedure. The fruit of these things, and of the temper

which produces them, is seen everywhere in callous indifference to the sufferings of others, and in universal brutality towards the lower animals, not to speak of the widespread practice of infanticide of young female children, and the utter indifference with which it is everywhere regarded. You will hardly be surprised to hear that cannibalism is a frequent feature of the orgies which follow on victory in clan feuds, or that the much vaunted ancestral worship itself was polluted during long periods of time by the burial with the dead of living slaves. The first instance of this kind which is on record in the native books took place in 677 B.C., when sixty-six persons were buried with King Wu of Ts'in, and the latest in the end of the fourteenth century; but a Jesuit missionary records another instance as late as the middle of the seventeenth century, when thirty persons were thus put to death at the burial of one of the wives of the Emperor Shun-che; and between these points of time large numbers of cases are on record, so that Chinese history is stained with these ghastly crimes for over two thousand years. The incidents recorded are only isolated cases in which notable families were concerned, but the practice was undoubtedly widely spread, and must have prevailed in all parts of the country. Even when it at last died out, the companion crime with which it was associated of encouraging or compelling the suicide of widows in order to accompany their husbands into the other world, has continued down to the present time, and well-known instances are on record within recent times. These unhappy widows drown, hang, strangle, or poison themselves, sometimes in private and sometimes with the utmost publicity. The most popular form of this custom is that in which the high local mandarins are invited to be present. They select the hour and day for the ceremony, and public announcement is made of it. The widow appears dressed in her finest clothing, visits her own family and friends in the neighbourhood, and

feasts with them. She then betakes herself to a decorated platform erected in a public place, where she receives the compliments of the mandarins, who prostrate themselves before her. When these preliminaries are over, she hangs herself in the presence of the whole concourse, which then disperses, with universal congratulations on the glory accruing to the family through this performance. Representations made through the high officials to the Imperial Government secure for the family the further honour of having a great stone archway erected at the expense of the Government, either in front of the house or in a neighbouring street, with inscriptions in honour of the woman who has thus proved her devotion.

Viewed in the light of what I have now said, the benevolent institutions, whose existence one cannot deny, lose much of their lustre. Indeed, when one has lived long among the Chinese, and the widespread brutality of their customs and character has eaten into one's soul, one reads in books and temples the praises of benevolence with loathing and abhorrence.

The righteousness which Mencius associates with benevolence is in no better case. A magistrate in coming to his decisions is guided by many considerations, but righteousness hardly ranks among them. There must be some men who, in the face of extreme difficulty, try to show some regard to righteousness and justice; but they are few, and the system is too strong for them. I once spent twelve days in the immediate neighbourhood of a magistrate's office in connection with a case of murder, and saw for the first time a good deal of the inner working of the Chinese machinery of law, and I have often had occasion to see something of it since. One is not so much struck by signal instances of departure from righteous judgment. What impresses one is that among all classes of those connected with the administration of the law it is assumed as a universal maxim that the last

consideration to weigh in any case is that of right and wrong. Money moves all the springs of action. Some magistrates are more greedy and some more ferocious than others, but everyone assumes that the probabilities of gain or some other out of the long list of corrupt motives will determine the result, and not the rights of the case itself.

Again, in the Chinese books their are continual praises of the virtue of sincerity. Confucius said on one occasion, "I do not know how a man without truthfulness is to get on. How can a large carriage be made to go without the crossbar for yoking the oxen to?" Mencius said, "Sincerity is the way of heaven, and to aim at sincerity is the way of man. Never was there one possessed of complete sincerity who did not move others; never was there one without sincerity who yet was able to move others." From Confucian scholars I have often heard loud praises of the virtue of sincerity; but the effect of their laudations is painful when coming, as it does, from men who themselves are almost universally steeped to the lips in falsehood. In this they are neither better nor worse than the bulk of their fellow-countrymen. We not only belong to a Christian people; we have also the advantage of descent, for the most part, from the old Teutonic stock, one of whose signal virtues, even in the time of their barbarism, was a regard for truth. It is difficult for us, therefore, to measure or believe in the universality of falsehood among non-Christian Oriental races. We can understand a man who under pressure tells a lie to save himself from the unpleasant consequences of his faults; but the Chinaman does not lie in this occasional manner, nor under any pressure of circumstance. He lies habitually, constantly, and without cause. No doubt it is often convenient—he would say necessary—to lie; but his lies are numerous far beyond the bounds of either convenience or necessity. Trying,

for my own satisfaction, to answer the question why men should lie without any apparent reason for it, I have come to the conclusion that they do so partly for practice and partly on general principles. It is always assumed that it might conceivably become inconvenient to have put you in possession of the truth, and rather than risk this inconvenience, even when still at a shadowy distance, they will tell you what is false. Social intercourse is looked upon as a game of cards. To tell the truth is to lay all your cards openly on the table, whereas to tell falsehoods consistently and always is to keep the command of the situation in your own hands. If a man tells you a falsehood in the first instance, he always has the truth to fall back upon in case of need ; whereas if he tells you the truth at first, there is nothing left behind. Whence one constantly notices that when conducting any business with the assistance of Chinese friends they and we generally draw different conclusions from what is said by those with whom we are dealing. At least we do so till long experience gives us practice in grasping the Chinese point of view. When a Chinaman has been talking with another, especially on matters of any intricacy, he never bases his conclusions directly upon what the other has said. He rather takes the words of the other as raw material out of which he may, by thinking back, extract what may be supposed to be the reality, not which the other expressed, but which he was endeavouring to conceal. Thus the practical outcome of a Chinese conversation is usually something very different from the algebraic sum of the things which have been said during its course.

Another of the favourite Chinese virtues is filial piety. This is lauded in the ancient books and in modern public opinion as the foundation of all virtues. "Filial piety," said an early disciple of Confucius, "and fraternal submission—are they not the root of all benevolent actions?"

There is a saying, "Of all the virtues filial conduct is the chief." This conception of filial piety as the root of virtues is closely connected with the patriarchal system on which society is built, and with the ancestral worship which is its apotheosis. I have already pointed out in another connection that the demand for filial piety is not associated with any corresponding conception of parental duty towards children. The interpretation of the idea is widened by including in it the idea of loyalty to the sovereign and of obedience to magistrates; the sovereign and the magistrate, each in his sphere, being regarded as the father of his people. A popular book for the young consists of twenty-four conspicuous incidents of filial piety, and some of its manifestations are extravagant enough; but alongside of this high conception the actual practice of filial piety is little known.

Incidents continually come to light, and find a place of honour in the Imperial Gazette, of sons or daughters-in-law who acquire a high reputation for filial piety by cutting off portions of their own flesh as food or medicine for aged or sick parents. In these cases rewards are bestowed on the chief actors by the Emperor himself.

Filial piety, as practised, also requires the use of obsequious phrases in letters to parents or other elders of the family, and demands ceremonious bowings and prostrations on important family occasions. Prolonged mourning, with every outward expression of woe, is also strictly required; and a son, even after he has grown up and has children, or perhaps grandchildren, of his own, is by law under the absolute control of his father, even in the matter of life and death, as long as the father lives. Where a son, by gambling or other vices, has disgraced or impoverished his family, it happens not unfrequently that the father, with the assistance of his friends, deliberately puts his son to death, sometimes by burying

alive. In such cases the law cannot interfere with the father's prerogative.

There are families, usually of the wealthier class, in which the patriarchal tradition is kept up in its healthier forms with happy results. But these are not common, and one seldom sees non-Christian children who have been taught to obey. Disobedience is the consistent rule, and obedience the rare exception.

The question of social morality in the narrower sense opens a dark region on which I will not enter. Chinese etiquette tries to maintain a specious and mechanical appearance of propriety. But the reality is very different, and shows itself in the whole temper and language of the people. Its results appear in our hospital practice, and even invade the young churches in the cases of discipline which, to our sorrow, come before us. There is no need in Chinese, as in English, to borrow from forgotten cities of antiquity names for the darker forms of vice. The language is amply provided with phrases of native growth, and in daily use by young and old, to describe them all. "It is a shame even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret"; but it is a shame which is hardly felt by the Chinese themselves.

Such, then, are a few glimpses of the background which must be kept in view if we would estimate intelligently and justly the character and attainments of the Christian converts in China.

LECTURE X

GROWTH AND CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH

Part II.—Christian Character in the Chinese Church

It is a dreary task to go through the list of virtues extolled in Chinese books, and to show how little they are found realised in the life of Chinese people. One might multiply incidents, but they would not greatly alter the impression which those of which I have spoken create in our minds.

Such, then, is the background against which the life and character of our Christian people is to be viewed. It is not fair and reasonable to ask whether they have that refinement and maturity of the Christian graces which has been slowly reached in our own country during the centuries which have passed since the first missionaries landed on our shores. But do the Chinese Christians stand out as a class distinct from their fellow-countrymen, not only in their moral ideas, but in actual character and life? When the question is put in this form, which is the only fair one, it is easily answered; and how confident we are that our answer is the right one you may gather from the fact of which I have already spoken, that in our Evangelistic preaching we do not hesitate to appeal in the presence of our non-Christian audiences to the lives of the Christians within their own knowledge as confirmation of the Gospel which we preach. I am not able to accept the statement one sometimes reads that one could pick out the Christians in any crowd by the altered expression and refinement of their faces. The assertion is sometimes due

more to the sanguine temperament of those who say so than to the facts of the case. One cannot expect people who for a life-time have lived a hard and narrow life warped and darkened by heathenism, as soon as their Christian career has begun to carry about with them in their very features the reflection of a higher faith, and the manifestation of a heavenly joy. Anyone who considers will see how impossible will be the application of such a test amongst our own people. Christians and those who are not Christians rub shoulders in our streets and even in our churches, and it would require more than human insight to tell which is which. Are there no Christians among ourselves whose looks belie them? Without pressing too far the maxim which Mr Morley has repeatedly quoted from Helvetius, "If you would love mankind you should not expect too much from them," we should at least try Christian converts from heathenism as we should try Christians at home, by reasonable standards. When that is done, the challenge thrown out in the Apology of Athenagoras is apt and sound, and by it the Christian Church in China could stand. "For who of those that reduce syllogisms, and clear up ambiguities, and explain etymologies, or of those who teach homonyms and synonyms, and predicaments and axioms—who of them have so purged their souls as, instead of hating their enemies, to love them; and, instead of speaking ill of those who have reviled them, to bless them, and to pray for those who plot against their lives?

"But among us you will find uneducated persons, and artisans, and old women, who, if they are unable in words to prove the benefit of our doctrine, yet by their deeds exhibit the benefit arising from their persuasion of its truth. They do not rehearse speeches, but exhibit good works; when struck, they do not strike again; when robbed, they do not go to law; they give to those that ask of them, and love their neighbours as themselves."

If this challenge were issued in our own time to thoughtful non-Christian Chinese in places where there is a considerable Christian community they would, I believe, in many instances testify to its justice. This opinion is confirmed by a thoughtful merchant in the East, who, though a severe critic of missions and missionary methods, yet criticises in a just and friendly spirit. He says, concerning the quality of the Chinese Christian converts, "Few as they may be when all told, and mixed as they must be with spurious professors, it is a gratifying fact which cannot be gainsaid, that Christians of the truest type, men ready to become martyrs, which is easy, and to lead helpful and honest lives, which is as hard as the ascent from Avernus, crown the labours of the missionaries, and have done so from the very beginning. It is thus shown that the Christian religion is not essentially unadapted to China, and that the Chinese character is susceptible to its regenerating power."

In regard to practical benevolence, unselfish kindness, and purity of morals in all departments, the Christians are undoubtedly far ahead of the mass of their fellow-countrymen. I have spoken of their contributions for religious purposes amounting in our Swatow Church to three and a quarter dollars per member per annum, which, as I pointed out, is for them the equivalent of an annual contribution of about £3, 5s. from the average working people of our own churches. Besides these regular contributions, they give frequently for special cases of need. When famines have occurred in other parts of China, our churches have sent contributions in aid of the sufferers. When individual cases of destitution come to light in their own neighbourhoods, the Christians are always forward in giving relief. I am afraid that we have too little encouraged this form of Christian charity in our native Church, from the fear of attracting to us too many of the needy, and perhaps of the idle, in the hope of securing

support. Not infrequently in times of persecution in our native Church the sufferers have been thrown to a large extent on the help of their fellow-Christians for support during considerable periods of time. In this case there is always a warm feeling of sympathy with those who suffer for the Gospel's sake, and great readiness to give generously for their sustenance. Whole families have been at times driven from their homes when the Gospel has made its first entrance to a village. Sometimes Christians have been boycotted, and put to great difficulty in the gathering in of their harvests, and to the discomfiture of their enemies the difficulty has been speedily overcome by the ready help of their fellow-Christians. An old man's house was torn down in one of these local outbreaks of persecution, and he was taunted with the remark, "You see how your God takes care of you." But the taunt lost its point when, shortly after, numbers of Christians were seen gathering from all quarters bringing bricks and lime, and together rebuilding his house with their own hands, and leaving him better housed than before. "Now," he said to his friends, "you see how my God takes care of me." A Christian man in one of our country congregations was attacked by a severe illness which confined him to his bed for a length of time. He was poor and dependent on his own exertions for his living. His wife had been from the first a bitter opponent of the Gospel, and was very indignant at her husband professing Christianity. His illness seemed to her, as it often does to the heathen in such cases, a just retribution sent by the offended gods for his infidelity to them. But during his illness his Christian friends frequently called to visit him, and on leaving, with unostentatious kindliness, left about his bed small sums of money. His wife began to see that Christianity was something more real than she had supposed; her bitter hostility was broken down, and she herself became a Christian.

Our principal hospital assistant at Swatow had for over twenty years given his time and labour unsparingly to the work of the Church, both in the hospital and in other departments. His eyesight became impaired, and feeling physically unequal to the demands of his work, he resigned his post and retired to his home about two years ago. Recently we asked him to undertake the post of preacher at one of our stations. Without even asking what salary we proposed to offer him, he at once consented, and has cheerfully taken up his new duties. A native Christian, on hearing of his decision, exclaimed with emphasis, "Well, that man has the mind of the Lord!" On inquiry, I found that a good medical practice had gathered round him at his home. He was greatly trusted, because it was remarked that he gave time and pains to his poorer patients as well as to the rich, often refusing to receive any fee from the poor. It is said that this practice, which was rapidly growing, brought him in last year more than five hundred dollars; and he cheerfully gave it up to become a preacher on a salary of little over one hundred, the same that he had had before as hospital assistant.

We have had many instances where the feeling and conduct of the Christians towards each other, as well as towards those outside the Christian community, has made a deep impression. One of the Christian women was at first bitterly opposed by her husband. He drove her from her home, threatened to take her life, and pursued her on one occasion with a knife, till she took refuge in the house of a married daughter. She supported herself by going about the villages selling native cloth to the women, and maintained so consistent a Christian profession that no fault could be found with her. When opportunity occurred, she sent kindly messages to her husband, and when a general conference of the Christians was held, she sent him a pair of new shoes and invited

him to come and see and hear for himself. Her patience and gentleness at last overcame his hostility. She had long been praying for him, and felt sure that he would be brought in. At length, to her great joy, he began to come to worship and applied for baptism. She was then able to return home, and she stood bravely by her husband when the persecution of the village was in turn directed against him. He then fled to the chapel in the neighbourhood for refuge, and she remained in the village to bear the brunt of the opposition. She was not allowed to draw water from the village well. None would sell rice or any food to her; none would speak to her. Her own daughter, when she heard that her parents had burned the family idols, cast them off and would not acknowledge them as her parents. But one woman in the village interceded for her with the villagers. "What do you persecute the woman for?" she said. "She has done you no harm. If she has burned her idols, were they not her own to do as she pleased with? You are persecuting her in every way you can think of, and yet you see she looks happy, and she does not hate you nor curse you. How is this?" The woman herself testified that during this time of trial she was never cast down. "The Lord," she said, "never left us, not for an hour, else how would not these people have destroyed us altogether?" "We were being persecuted and hated, and yet in my heart there was great peace; and although my fellow-villagers would not speak to me nor listen to my words, the people of the neighbouring villages were glad to hear me and glad to know how it was I was able to bear all this trouble, and so I was able to preach the Gospel to many of them." Her own son took an active part in the persecution of his parents, but he too was won at length.

For many years his mother has lived a most consistent and happy Christian life, one of the most eager and responsive hearers in the congregation, and one of the

GROUP OF BIBLE WOMEN

most active in testifying to others. Besides her husband and son, her mother, her younger brother, and two sisters, were brought to Christ through her influence. She was afterwards the means of bringing in many more. When she was over fifty years of age she learned, to her great delight, to read and write. One use to which she put her ability to write was the drawing up of a list of persons whom she believed she had been enabled to bring to the Saviour, that she might keep them before her for prayer on their behalf. On one occasion when we were leaving China she brought a copy of this list to my wife, asking that we would join her in prayer for those whose names were contained in it. At that time the list contained upwards of seventy names, and I have no doubt that many have been added to it since. She first received the Gospel while in our hospital, to which she had come for treatment, and she testifies that she believed the first time she heard, being exceedingly rejoiced to know that her sins could be forgiven. She had a singular gift in speaking to the women, having an especially happy use of illustrations, but her bright and kindly manner was perhaps the chief secret of her power.

We have continual testimonies from those who come to us as applicants for baptism that they have been influenced more by what they have known of the life of Christian neighbours and friends than by hearing public preaching, and we have many instances in which, after one member of a family has been brought in, the others have been gathered one by one by the consistent example daily set before them. An old woman whom I examined lately as an applicant for baptism, said that she was influenced by the example of her son. She testified that since he became a Christian he was a different man from what he had been before. A young girl had been betrothed to a Christian, but his early death led her grandmother, under whose care she was, to betroth her into a non-

Christian family, the inducement being the hope of receiving a much larger amount of betrothal money. Every effort was made to induce the old woman to break off the arrangement, and marry her grand-daughter into a Christian family. A Chinese home, constructed on the patriarchal system, with several generations living in the same house, is a sphere in which it is extremely difficult for one individual, and especially for a young girl, who enters the family as an entire stranger, to take an independent course, and to make alone the Christian profession. So difficult is it that a native elder once proposed in presbytery that any Christian parent betrothing her daughter into a non-Christian family should be severely dealt with by way of discipline, giving as his reason that it was almost impossible for a girl in such a case to be a Christian. Notwithstanding all the efforts that were made, the marriage in this case was carried out; but instead of losing, as we had feared, her own Christian life, the girl has been enabled not only to maintain it, but to influence the whole family. Several members of it have become Christians; their influence has told upon their neighbours, and the result has been the planting of a new church in their village. In another similar case a girl who was married to a heathen husband was the means of his conversion, and they are unitedly living the Christian life.

I have spoken of the utter lack of truthfulness among the non-Christian Chinese, and you can easily understand that the habit of falsehood is not easily thrown off by those who make the Christian profession, even when their life in other respects shows that the profession is a genuine one. But even in this matter there is an enormous difference between the practice of the Christians and that of their fellow-countrymen. I cannot say that the Christians always, or perhaps even generally, become absolutely and fully truthful; but there are not a few

among them whose word can be absolutely relied upon. A man who as a boy entered the service of one of our senior missionaries, and was with him as servant for many years, was one of the most faithful and conscientious members of our native Church. He was chosen and ordained to the office of the eldership, and discharged it with the utmost faithfulness and to the great advantage of all who came within the reach of his influence. He was consulted both by the missionaries and by the native Christians in all matters of difficulty, and his advice and opinion always carried, and justly carried, the utmost weight. He had been naturally a man of a somewhat proud disposition and a hot temper; but as a Christian these natural features of character were curiously blended with a very real and almost extreme modesty, and with admirable self-restraint, which gave double weight to his words. When occasion called for it he could rebuke wrong-doers with the utmost plainness, and sometimes, we felt, with an almost unnecessary severity; but it was done with such transparent honesty of purpose, and such a real desire for the good of those with whom he was dealing, that his faithfulness seldom, if ever, gave offence. One who knew him well would never dream of doubting his word upon any question of fact. Still, in him, and in others like him, there was a curious survival of old habits, which sometimes one felt to be hardly consistent with our conception of absolute truthfulness. What I mean is this. He would never say anything which was untrue; but he would sometimes refrain from telling us the whole truth in a way which sometimes seemed to us blameworthy. So far as the Chinese have any conception of the wrong of speaking untruthfully, it generally takes this form, that an untruth told to the injury of another is considered to be deserving of condemnation; but it is a very prevalent opinion that an untruth told to shield or help another is either wholly justifiable or at least very excusable. The

elder to whom I have referred had quite overcome, I believe, the temptation to this kind of dishonesty; but Chinese opinion in general condemns strongly the frank telling of the truth in cases where it will have the effect of injuring a man with his employer. This is called "upsetting a man's rice-bowl," and is generally considered even more worthy of disapprobation than telling an untruth to shelter him would be. One need not therefore be much surprised that the elder of whom I have spoken, like others whose positive statements could also be accepted in any case without reserve, yet reconciled it to his conscience to keep silent as to the faults of others, and especially of preachers or other persons in our employment, when it appeared to us that he ought to have spoken out. A direct question in such a case would at any time have elicited the truth; but the old habit survived in the form of a readiness to conceal long after the temptation to distort or falsify had been wholly overcome. But we must recognise that even in such cases an enormous advance has been made, and the degree of truthfulness attained may be even more significant of victory through the help of God's grace and spirit over habits of evil than our own habitual truthfulness itself.

I remember one of the boys in our higher school coming to see me, with an explanation to make which cost him not a little embarrassment and distress. He had been admitted in ordinary course to the school a year or two before, and his age had been stated by his father at fifteen, in accordance with the requirements for admission; but the boy came now, with tears in his eyes, to tell me that at the time his father said he was fifteen years of age he was really only fourteen, and properly ineligible for admission to the school. He himself had not taken part in this misrepresentation, but felt that by his silence he had become a party to it. The matter had weighed upon his conscience so heavily that he felt bound to come and tell

me the real state of the case, and he did so although he evidently anticipated that the result would probably be his dismission from the school. It seemed to me to indicate the working of conscience, which was not a little remarkable in a Chinese boy who had only recently become a professing Christian; and I felt justified in assuring him that while I appreciated the sensitiveness which had caused him to make the confession, I could not regard him as responsible for his father's falsehood.

Another Christian lad entered my service some eighteen years ago, and during all that time has been a most trustworthy and useful servant. For a number of years he has acted as cook in the household, and made our daily purchases in the native market. He keeps his accounts with the utmost accuracy and care, and although small peculations are universally considered as only the natural and proper perquisites of Chinese servants, he has not only never attempted to make unjust gains, but, on the contrary, has continually made suggestions and given us information which he could easily have withheld, with a view to our interests being secured in the most economical possible way. Such things as these and many others which I can recall indicate, in a country like China, a very real working of the Christian spirit against one of the most widespread and characteristic of Oriental vices.

In regard to another of the very prevalent sins of the tongue among the non-Christian Chinese, it has always seemed to me that the rapid advance made by the Christians is very remarkable indeed. I refer to the continual use by old and young of foul and shameful language. This is so absolutely universal, so habitual, and so utterly shameless, that I have often marvelled at the completeness with which the Christian Chinese overcome the habit. This is often illustrated in our country journeys, when we employ chair-bearers, boatmen, or porters who are not Christians, and employ perhaps along

with them some who are. Travelling together day after day, often in circumstances of difficulty and discomfort, one is painfully struck by the use of such language on the most trifling occasions by those who are not Christians; while, on the other hand, one may travel for weeks together, observing continually the language and conduct of the Christian men amongst them, without ever hearing a single word which one could regret. This seems to me to be an attainment which it is impossible to attribute to anything less than a genuine work of the spirit of purity in the hearts of these men. How remarkable it is was illustrated some time ago in the experience of a woman whom I examined as an applicant for baptism. I asked her what had first drawn her attention to Christian truth and led her to become a worshipper. She had been a vegetarian Buddhist, one of a class with whom we occasionally meet, who seem to have some real earnestness of spirit, and some desire for what is good. She told me that she had noticed some little children who daily passed her door on their way to school. They were the children of a Christian family in the neighbourhood, and as they passed along the streets they were often laughed at and reviled for being Christians. What attracted her attention and caused her great surprise was that these little children received all this abuse in a quiet and gentle way, and never thought of returning it with foul and rude language, as all other Chinese children of whom she had had any experience would certainly have done. Attracted by this strange phenomenon, she followed them to their home and asked their mother what the explanation of it was, and how she was able to train her children to behave so well. She there received her first knowledge of Christian truth; became a regular attendant at the chapel in the neighbourhood, and by the time I made her acquaintance had become an intelligent and active Christian, and on the testimony of all those

who knew her, I had the utmost satisfaction in admitting her to baptism. Since her baptism she has not only maintained a consistent Christian profession, but has made herself most useful in visiting non-Christian families of her acquaintance in the large city where she lives, and has brought not a few under the influence of the Gospel.

The reference I have just made to our country journeys suggests to me an instance which has often impressed me of the very manifest exercise of another Christian grace. A man who was for many years one of our most useful preachers was lately ordained as minister of the native congregation in Swatow. He has often accompanied me on long country journeys, sometimes in districts where we had no mission station, and had to put up with whatever accommodation was to be had in native inns. In these circumstances one's comfort depends largely upon the temper and patience of one's companions, and I was led to estimate this preacher very highly for this feature of his character, in addition to many other good qualities, that I never saw in him in such circumstances the slightest taint of selfishness. His own ease or comfort was never a consideration with him. He was always ready, with a cheerfulness and geniality which won the hearts of the least friendly, to do his utmost, whether in preaching to the heathen with whom we met, or in dealing with Christians or new worshippers. Wherever we have sent him as a preacher he has impressed himself upon all those amongst whom he worked, chiefly by his manifest and unfailing kindliness and unselfishness.

We meet with many illustrations of the working of the grace of God in the hearts of these people in connection with the sore trials and bitter persecutions which they often have to meet. Recent converts so often meet with sorrows and trials very hard to bear that it has been often remarked among us that it almost seems as if such trials were frequently sent to the Chinese Christians in the

earlier stages of their Christian life as a special discipline in the providence of God. When one of the first converts in the Swatow district began to make a Christian profession, his wife was so bitterly hostile and so enraged at his conduct, believing probably that by doing so he had lost all reputation in their village, that, in her rage and disappointment, she hanged herself. Another, soon after his conversion, suffered the loss by death of one of his sons. In another case two sons were drowned by the upsetting of a ferry-boat. My own servant, to whom I referred a little ago, had, as a boy, along with his younger sister, followed his mother in becoming a Christian, the father and two older brothers remaining heathens. While still a young lad in our higher school in Swatow, he was summoned by letter to return home on account of his mother's severe illness. Shortly after she died, and it fell to the lot of the eldest son to conduct the funeral rites. To the great indignation of their neighbours, the son, though not himself a Christian, carried out his mother's wishes, arranging that she should be buried as a Christian, without any of the usual heathen ceremonies. Immediately after, the son himself took ill and died, and throughout the village it was loudly declared that he had died in consequence of the anger of the gods on account of his neglect. The younger son and daughter having again been summoned to be present at their mother's burial, and having heard nothing of their brother's illness, only arrived in time to see their brother buried. They were immediately assailed by all their friends with the utmost urgency that unless they gave up their Christian profession they would share the same fate, and for two children in a family where all the other members were opposed to them the ordeal must have been a severe one. The girl at least was really frightened by the representations made to them, but both were enabled to stand firm.

Persecution in innumerable forms is a continual ex-

perience for our Christian people. Parents often encounter the bitter hostility of their children, and children have often been beaten and sometimes cast out by their parents. Wives have been often driven from their homes and found themselves in the utmost difficulty to secure a livelihood. Beating and plundering are often resorted to ; and even where no open violence occurs, many other ways are found of making life hard for those who profess themselves Christians. If they are cultivators they are sometimes refused their share of water from the irrigation system in the fields belonging to the village. Sometimes, with a refinement of ingenuity, their turn for drawing water for their fields is carefully allotted to them on Sundays. In the country villages it is the custom to appoint vigilance committees whose duty it is to watch over the growing crops, especially by night, and in the event of theft to make good the loss to the owner of the plundered property. This protection is often denied to the Christians, and it becomes known to everyone that their fields may be plundered with impunity. We have often had to admire the patience and forbearance with which these wrongs are borne.

Persecution not infrequently takes more open and violent forms. Many years ago I was visiting a market town in which we had recently opened a station. The room which served as bedroom, eating-room, and place of worship, was crowded far into the night by a large number of the worshippers from the surrounding country, many of whom had only begun to be hearers of the truth. Some time after we heard that one of these men had set apart a little house belonging to himself in his native village as a place of worship. Many threats had been uttered to deter him and his friends from beginning Christian worship in the village. One Sabbath morning thirteen of them met for worship, and their leader, though not yet a member of the Church and having but little

Christian knowledge, read to them the Parable of the Sower, and conducted their worship. Just as the service was closing they heard the sound of gongs and trumpets. Presently the house was surrounded by an angry crowd, armed with stones, spears, and the poles for carrying burdens, which, being often tipped with iron, make in the hands of violent men most formidable weapons. The doors were broken in, and several of the worshippers were severely wounded while attempting to escape. Their leader succeeded in fleeing to another house, where he concealed himself in a cupboard for some time. Presently he was discovered and dragged out. One of the others who had been seized and severely beaten was tied up to a tree near the door of the little house where they had met. I remember his describing to me how he stood there bruised and suffering, and saw his friend dragged by upon the ground. Those who had seized him beat him as they went, although already as he passed him he seemed to be nearly dead. He was then dragged down to the river which flows past the village, beaten to death, and his head cut off. They then brought some of his blood, smeared it on the face of his friend, and asked him whether his God could save him. He was left bound until nightfall, when under cover of darkness he succeeded in getting free and crawled away, bruised and wounded as he was, to another village, where he took refuge in the house of a relative. This outbreak of violence became widely known throughout the district, and at the time not a few who had been coming to worship withdrew in terror. When the matter was brought to the notice of the district magistrate he did everything in his power to deny and conceal the facts, and it was only after long effort on our part that the leading murderer, who was a nephew of his victim, was for some time imprisoned for the crime. Some, however, stood firm throughout that time of fiery trial, and although everything was done by

the enemies of the Christian cause to overthrow it, we are now in peaceful occupation of a number of stations throughout that district, and many sincere worshippers have been gathered into the Church. A little boy who was present during the attack, and was carried out by his father, who saved the boy's life by receiving blows aimed at him on his own body, is now one of our preachers. In village preaching of that time one was often told by the heathen that it was useless to preach our religion in the district when such things befell those who professed it, and many of the more faint-hearted Christians were of the same mind. But experience has taught us that even such painful instances as these, though they may seem for a time to hinder the progress of the Gospel, ultimately give solidity and reality to our work, and help not a little to secure the purity of the native Church.

The way in which the Christians bear their trials and persecutions is a marked testimony to the real power of the Gospel and the genuineness of their faith. In a small village which had once been a place of some wealth, but had long fallen into decay, an old man heard and received the Gospel. He was very poor, partially lame, and partially blind. He had three sons, all of whom were lepers, and in his family life before he became a Christian he had passed through many trials. He was a man of whom one might naturally have raised the question, whether for him life was worth living; and he declared himself that, were it not for the comforts and hopes of the Gospel, he could not bear his sorrows. He received the Gospel with a simple and earnest faith, and was in the habit of going about everywhere commending it to all with a gentle urgency and a bright happy spirit that so won those to whom he spoke that he was able to go about freely and unharmed in places where others would have been in serious danger. He was a firm believer in prayer, and by the infection of his earnestness he succeeded

in building a house in his native village to be used as a place of worship and residence for a preacher. He could contribute little money, but he and his friends did what they could, and added to it a large amount of labour freely given. He succeeded by his earnestness in inducing one of our preachers, who had formerly been a carpenter, to do most of the woodwork free of expense, to the neglect, as we sometimes feared, of his more proper duties. At last the chapel was finished, to his great delight, and it became a centre of usefulness in all the neighbourhood, and a stepping-stone towards the occupation of a large city not far off.

Many of the native Christians show marked zeal in seeking to spread the Gospel among their friends. Indeed, their zeal sometimes outruns their knowledge. There was a woman in the Swatow congregation who was originally a native of the island of Hainan. Having been married to a Swatow man, she had left her home some forty years ago, and had become a Christian while in the Swatow district. Her husband died some years ago. Her eldest son is not a Christian, but has not shown any special hostility. Her youngest son was for a number of years in our elementary and higher schools, and afterwards became a medical student in one of our hospitals. His recovery from a dangerous illness during his boyhood seemed to quicken his mother's zeal and faith. For a long time she voluntarily attended the hospital daily, speaking to the women, and endeavouring to bring them to the truth. Both in the hospital and elsewhere she was made a blessing to many. Four years ago a Danish missionary and his wife working in Hainan visited Swatow; and on hearing this woman's history, they proposed to her that she should go with them to Hainan to help in work amongst the women there. Although the island was her native place, she had left it so long that she had lost all trace of her relatives, and could no longer think of it

as her home. Her going there involved a long voyage, a trying change of climate, and the leaving behind of her children and all the friends of her later life. She was by this time a woman of nearly sixty years of age, but she cheerfully accepted the invitation, and went off not long after, saying that she was delighted that, like Paul, she was to spend the rest of her days in travelling to distant places to spread the Gospel.

In this country, one or two generations ago, great stress was laid in our religious literature upon death-bed testimonies to the power of the Gospel. Now we have come, perhaps with justice, to attach more importance to the even tenor of the common life than to the rarer experiences of its last days; but the deaths of Christian converts in China often form a striking testimony to those about them, and compel them to recognise the power of the Gospel. Last summer, during an outbreak of plague, a little girl who was a day scholar in one of our schools in the Amoy district was asked to discontinue her attendance, lest by her coming daily from her home in the city the plague might be introduced into the school. She lived with her father, who was a Christian, but her mother and grandmother had been very much opposed to the Gospel. The progress made by their little girl at school greatly interested her mother and her grandmother, who were very proud of it, and through her became interested in the Gospel. Some time after she left school she was seized by plague, and when all hope had been given up, her friends prepared her for burial as the Chinese do, by putting on her best clothes, shoes and earrings. When she was dressed in this way to prepare for her burial, she sang aloud two hymns—"The Narrow Road to Heaven" and "Jesus Loves Me," then prayed aloud, and soon after died. The neighbours crowded around in wonder at her peace and happiness. One man who was an opium smoker, and who was present at her

death, sat and cried like a child, and afterwards went back to his shop, told his apprentices that the Gospel was true, and announced that he had resolved to give up opium and become a Christian. On the following Sunday there were eight new worshippers in the two churches in the city, all of whom had been influenced to come by the happy death of this little girl. Of the eight some fell away afterwards, and the opium-smoker found that it was easier to resolve than to reform; but three at least of those who were attracted to the Christian life by this incident have been going on giving every token of sincerity and earnestness.

There have been several conspicuous instances of generous kindness and courage shown by Chinese Christians in helping and protecting foreign missionaries in times of danger. When two little English children, their father and mother, and six other English women, all belonging to the Church Missionary Society, were murdered three years ago in the neighbourhood of Foo-chow, one of the points of light in the dark story was the conduct of a Chinese woman and a boy in the service of one of the ladies who was attacked. They wrested, at the peril of their lives, a spear from her captor's hands, and enabled her to escape. In another case similar courage was shown by a Chinese woman who was walking through the streets of a city with an American lady missionary, when a man suddenly seized a chopper and for no apparent reason attacked the missionary. The Chinese woman immediately interposed, received some of the blows upon her own arm, and succeeded in saving her friend from injury. In Manchuria, when Mr Wylie, of the United Presbyterian mission, was cruelly murdered by Chinese soldiers during the war with Japan, a noble effort to save him was made by a deacon who happened to be with him at the time of the attack. He stood by Mr Wylie through all the violence of the savage mob,

sheltered him from many of the blows aimed at him, and when at last the missionary fell, severely wounded and fainting, on the ground, the deacon threw himself down on the top of him, endeavouring to save him by receiving on his own body the blows that were rained upon him. He was only separated from Mr Wylie by being violently dragged away, and then succeeded in crawling along the ground to the office of one of the mandarins, where he gave the alarm, and besought protection for the missionary who was being murdered. In view of the recklessness of the Chinese temper in regard to the suffering of others, and the entire selfishness which dominates the ordinary Chinaman's attitude towards those who are in trouble, you will appreciate the significance of deeds like these.

Now that mission work has been carried on in south China during more than one generation, it is interesting to trace manifest tokens of the continued working through long periods of the spirit of God in family life. You may remember that I spoke of ten women who were advised by a devotee of one of the idols to come to Swatow and inquire as to the way of salvation. One of these women has a son who attended the Swatow high school shortly after it was opened, while a girl to whom he had been betrothed was also a scholar in our girls' school. Although the lad's mother was a Christian, she had become somewhat careless, and being especially liable to faults of temper, their home life was not happy. The son and daughter-in-law did not remain long at school, and shortly after their return home were married. Their unhappy relations with the mother led to their giving up attending Christian worship, and they even relapsed so far into the heathenism around them as to go to the temple of one of the idols to make prayers and ask for responses. The case was for many years a cause of great grief to many of the Christians in the neighbourhood. The young man would not listen to any remonstrances, and not

infrequently ran away to hide when Christian friends came to visit him. The mother continued her Christian profession, and in later years made good progress, and, especially after attending one of the women's classes in Swatow, attained to a much more earnest Christian life. Meantime her son and his family had become very poor, and left their home in search of employment. By this time they were showing a more penitent spirit, and seemed to have some real desire to return to the right way. At length the son found employment in the service of a missionary, and was able to send his children to a Christian school. His wife spoke of herself as having been the lost sheep, and when she spoke of the many trials through which they had passed, she acknowledged that all this discipline had been for good, and that the Saviour had by means of it brought them back to himself. Their home now became a centre of Christian influence, and it was their children of whom I spoke to you as leading a heathen woman to find the truth by their gentle conduct. The latest incident in the story of this family took place before I left China, when I received the father and mother to communion and baptised their children one Sabbath afternoon in Chao-chow-foo.

Another of these family histories goes back to the very beginnings of mission work in our district. One of the men who was first attracted by the teaching of Mr Lechler, somewhere about the year 1848, discouraged by the trials which he met at the outset, seemed to abandon altogether his Christian profession. When Mr Lechler left the district it was with the bitter impression that all his toil in that region had been in vain, and that this man in particular, of whom he had had great hopes, had gone back entirely to idolatry. More than thirty years later Mr Lechler revisited the village. This man whose defection long ago had caused him so much sorrow had in the interval, under the influence of William Burns, returned to

the Christian faith, been baptised by our mission, and had been for many years a most faithful and useful preacher of the Gospel. At the time of Mr Lechler's visit there was a Christian congregation in the place with a membership of more than eighty communicants and a considerable Christian community besides. The congregation was under the care of a native minister with native elders and deacons. The old preacher, somewhat enfeebled by age, had now retired from active work, but his eldest son was a deacon and leader of the Sabbath school in the local congregation; his second son was a student, who not long after was ordained as a minister; his third son was second assistant in our hospital at Swatow, one of the best of our native preachers, and elder in the Swatow congregation; the fourth son had been for a time a student in our college, until obliged by ill-health to leave and go into business; while one of the daughters, having been a pupil in our girls' school at Swatow, was now giving assistance in teaching some of the older women To carry the story one stage further, into the third generation, I may add that not long ago I received to communion the eldest daughter of the second son.

The story of this family is the story of a mission "failure," and had Mr Lechler not lived to a ripe old age he would never have known how much good had come from his apparently unsuccessful labours. It would take too long to go on narrating individual instances to illustrate the character of the Chinese Christians. The instances of which I have spoken, with many others of like kind, are all tokens which are surely both unmistakable and undeniable of the working in Chinese hearts of the spirit of Christ. They serve to show that, however small the beginnings of the Christian life amongst the heathen may be, there is indeed a living power whose tendency is always from less to more, and which out of weakness is made strong.

The question is sometimes asked, whether the character of the native converts is sufficiently marked and vigorous to affect in any way the opinions or the moral tone of the non-Christian community around them. For many years of my missionary life I should have answered this question in the negative. In China the non-Christian communities consist of enormous numbers of people with a consolidated life and civilisation of their own. I was slow to believe that the very small number of Christians amongst them could wield any appreciable influence over such large masses of those who, in thought and sympathy, were so alien to themselves. In later years, however, it has become impossible to shut one's eyes to the fact that the Christian influence is telling.

"The dear Lord's best interpreters
Are humble human souls;
The Gospel of a life like theirs
Is more than books or scrolls.

"From scheme and creed the light goes out,
The saintly fact survives:
The Blessed Master none can doubt,
Revealed in holy lives."

The village of Iam-tsau, to which I have referred as the scene of Lechler's early labours, supplies a recent instance. A wooden bridge, which carried the road over a stream in the outskirts of the village, was recently in need of extensive repairs, and the headmen proposed to rebuild it more substantially of stone. On consulting the villagers, with a view to their subscribing the funds, they were told that subscriptions would come in much more freely if the money, and the carrying out of the work, were put, not into the hands of the ordinary headmen, but into those of the heads of the Christian community, and an elder and a deacon of the local congregation were named as suitable men who would command the confidence of all. The

GROUP OF CHRISTIANS AT IAM-TSAU

rapacity of the headmen prevented the plan from being carried out, but the popular feeling was unmistakable.

There is ample evidence that the opinion and practice of the Christians has created in many quarters a revolution in native sentiment with regard to the barbarously cruel custom of crushing the feet of the girls. Female infanticide is also said to have become less common in deference to Christian opinion, but as other influences, notably the scarcity and dearness of wives, are working in the same direction, it is difficult to ascertain whether this is directly due to Christian influence or to other causes.

We often see evidences, not always in very tangible form, of a growing opinion in non-Christian society that the Christians have somehow the secret of a better life and a higher type of character than heathenism is able to produce.

Indeed, within the last two years the influence of the native Church, and of the ideas which are propagated by the Christian mission, has been making itself felt in the most far-reaching and conspicuous way. You have heard much of the "Reform Party" in China, of its struggles and its martyrs, and of the bitter hatred which it has drawn upon itself from all the forces of reaction. Its ideas have laid hold of the highest circles of influence, and of some of the ablest men of official rank. They have carried with them the Emperor himself, who seems to have become only too eager to give effect to the new ideas which have been stirring in his Empire. While these movements bear on the face of them more a political than a religious aspect, they are undoubtedly the outcome of the Christian leaven which has been working for so many years almost unseen and frequently denied by shallow observers, but whose working has nevertheless been the strongest of all the influences that are combining to shape the future destinies of China. Movements of this sort cannot be contemplated without some anxiety

when one remembers the terrible example of what they may become, in the great Taiping Rebellion, which swept over China and desolated many of her provinces nearly forty years ago. The men who began that movement were readers of the Bible, and professed themselves worshippers of God. When their armies were on their victorious march towards the north of China, they everywhere swept away the idols in their path. But their hold of Christian teaching was superficial. Natural passions of self-conceit and ambition led them far away from the simplicity of the truth, and their movement ended not only in defeat and ruin for themselves, but in dire disaster for millions of the Chinese people. Associated as that movement undoubtedly was in its inception with the teaching of the Christian missions, it has often seemed to me amazing that, notwithstanding that terrible experience, the Chinese Government should have allowed us the absolute freedom which we have so long enjoyed for the preaching throughout China of the Gospel. It is no ignorant bigotry that makes a body like the ruling classes of China dread and hate the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To our minds it is a message of peace and healing, but when it comes in conflict with the old powers of heathenism, influences are called into play of an energy and sweep far beyond our control, and in contemplating some of its effects amidst a heathen civilisation like that of China, one is reminded of our Lord's words, "I am not come to send peace on earth, but a sword." We long earnestly to see tokens that the great mass of heathen society is being reached and influenced by our teaching, and by the character of those who have already accepted it; but while we do so, we ought never to shut our eyes to the tremendous seriousness of the work in which we are engaged. It is no doubt in our immediate intention the work of saving individual souls, of leading them to a purer life here and a happy life hereafter, but it is a work

also which tells with enormous power and with consequences which we are wholly unable to calculate, upon national life and destiny. The question must sometimes press itself upon thoughtful minds in view of the great issues of such work as this, "Have we any right to disturb the lives of nations by the introduction amongst them of such enormous forces, and, in view of the dangers involved, is it worth while?" The question is well answered in words once used by Principal Rainy in a public address: "It is worth while, *if we mean it*; it is worth while, if for ourselves Christ is the one necessity of our hearts." Those who undertake to carry on mission work amongst great peoples, undertake great responsibilities. We have no right to penetrate these nations with a revolutionary Gospel of enormous power unless we are prepared also to make every sacrifice and every effort for the proper care, and the wise training and organisation, of the Christian community itself, which, while it must become increasingly a source of revolutionary thought and movement, is also the only body that can by the help and grace of God give these far-reaching movements a healthy direction, and lead them to safe and happy issues.

The principal method of securing these results is the patient use within the Church of a faithful and wholesome Church discipline. As soon as a Church is planted in a heathen country the continual necessity of this process becomes apparent. The new life which is adjusting itself to the strange conditions by which it is surrounded is often lodged in the hearts of those who are very ill-fitted, either by experience or training, for meeting the exigencies which constantly arise. They continually need guidance and help, and their mistakes frequently need correction by reproof. This may be regarded as one of the greatest problems of the mission field—to hold with a firm grasp, and weigh in an even balance, the require-

ments of the Christian law, and the conditions of native life. Many things which are strange to us, and many even which seem to us highly objectionable, must be recognised as matters of national or local custom which, however unattractive to our eyes, present no essential inconsistency with the law of Christ. Other things which have in them real elements of evil are so bound up with the whole order of society that it is only by the utmost patience and vigilance that they can be gradually extricated, and the path of duty for the individual Christian made clear. The exercise of Church discipline is therefore a fundamentally important function. It is not only the method by which we seek to rectify individual aberrations and develop individual character. It is also the sphere in which the Church as a living body attains to the consciousness for itself of the meaning of the law of Christ, and the responsibilities and the possibilities of the Christian life.

On many subjects questions of discipline are simple enough. Whole regions of individual and social life belong so manifestly to the heathen world that they are necessarily condemned at the outset by the awakened Christian conscience. Idolatry in all its ramifications, with the whole congeries of heathen ceremonies, is of course rejected, and over all this region of life no compromise is possible. In social, domestic and individual morals, many practices and customs are condemned by the better thought of the Chinese themselves, although they are condoned in actual life, or they come to be regarded with indifference through the lack of any sufficient moral power to resist them. Against these also Christian consciousness wages uncompromising war, feeling that it is not only able to see and recognise the good, but that it is also bound to realise it. But there are many questions in regard both to worship and morals where there is much room for the exercise of Christian

casuistry in the best sense. For a Christian man living in a heathen society it is often difficult to determine where precisely his responsibilities cease. For instance, with the rejection of idolatry there follows necessarily the rejection of all trades and handicrafts which directly depend upon it. The making of idols and other objects of worship, with all the paraphernalia of heathen ceremony, is a large branch of native trade which every Christian man must regard as closed to him. But there are certain industries more or less linked on to these which are yet in themselves wholly innocent and useful. For example, we have had brought before our presbytery the case of an artist whose craft included the painting of portraits, the colouring and decoration of lanterns, and the designing of various kinds of ornament. In all these branches he was liable to be involved in some of the eddies of idolatrous custom, and yet in all of them also there seemed to be a legitimate sphere for honest industry. Portraits, for example, might be used either as family memorials in the most legitimate way, or they might be used for the unlawful purposes of ancestral worship. So also lanterns and decorations might form part of the pageantry of heathenism, or they might be confined to the lawful uses of domestic ornament. The native brethren felt that the individual conscience could hardly be left to extricate these complex questions for itself, and that some guidance was necessary. At the same time it was needful to avoid unreasonable interference with individual liberty, and since in a heathen country many lines of industry are necessarily closed against the Christians, we feel that we have no right to put needless difficulties in the way of any.

The question of Sabbath observance in a heathen country is one of extreme difficulty. There are many holidays observed by native society which are most of them of the nature of religious festivals. They amount

in the course of the year to a much larger number than the number of our Christian Sabbaths, but they do not coincide with them; and since they often interfere with trade and industry, the Christian must often cut off from the number of his working days both the Christian Sabbaths and the heathen holidays. The Sabbath is, of course, wholly unknown in Chinese society, though there are in Chinese literature some curious indications which suggest that it was known to the ancient Chinese. Even with ourselves, where one rest-day in seven is recognised by public law and by almost universal practice, questions of Sabbath observance, especially in industrial life, are often of extreme complexity and difficulty. This of course is much more the case in China. It presses perhaps least hardly upon the great body of the agricultural people. Their fields and their time are their own, and it is open to them to adjust their work so as to leave the Lord's Day free. But even for them difficulties arise through their association with others. The irrigation systems are under the united control of a whole village, and it may often fall to the lot of the Christian to take his share in work of this sort on the Lord's Day. The same difficulty occurs in other branches of work where combination is required. For example, the crushing of the sugar-cane is carried out, as I have explained, in crushing mills and boiling establishments which are the property of the villages or sections of them, and which are worked by all in rotation. What is the duty of a Christian man in these circumstances? If called upon to take his share of the work on Sunday, is he bound to refuse? If he sends a substitute, is he not obeying the law in the letter and breaking it in the spirit? Again, in the fishing towns along the coast, a still more difficult situation continually arises. The fleets of fishing boats with their nets and tackling are generally the property of large capitalists

The boats work in pairs, and each boat's crew consists of seven men. If one of these men becomes a Christian, what course is he to follow? He has no controlling voice in the management of the boat, and must go and come as desired by the boat's crew. Even if he should seek to get together a band of like-minded Christian men, it would be necessary for him to collect not one boat's crew, but two, and even then there would remain the difficulty of the men's relation to the non-Christian capitalists upon whom they depend. In the cities and market towns similar difficulties meet those who belong to the shopkeeping class. When Christian men are in partnership with non-Christians they cannot insist that the shop shall be closed in obedience to their wishes. It may be considered a liberal concession if the heathen partner is willing to carry on the work on Sundays and allow the Christian to absent himself. And when the Christian man carries on business alone he still encounters many difficulties. His customers often come from a distance, visiting the city on market days to make their purchases, and if they find his shop unaccountably closed on certain days which they have no convenient means of reckoning, they will naturally be driven to withdraw their custom.

Notwithstanding all these difficulties, our Church in south China has from the beginning maintained a somewhat strict standard of Sabbath observance, and it has always been found that where there was an earnest desire to follow the law of Christ in all the departments of life, difficulties have been overcome, and solutions have been found, even in the most perplexing cases. Some missions in China have so far yielded to the difficulties of the situation as to require of their Church members little more than a single attendance at public worship on the Lord's Day, allowing them to regard the rest of the time as their own to be employed without restriction. This is uni-

versally the case in the Roman Catholic missions, and a similar practice is followed in several Protestant ones. When dealing with cases of difficulty of this kind which press hard upon individuals, one's sympathies are often touched, and one is tempted to ask whether we are not laying too heavy a burden upon shoulders that are ill-fitted to bear it. On the other hand, from the necessities of the situation, the observance or non-observance of the Lord's Day often becomes, in the eyes of Christians and heathen alike, the most visible and practical test of a man's Christian profession. Again, if in the early stages, out of regard to difficulties in the way, we encourage the formation of a lower ideal of what the Lord's Day should be in individual and social life, when or how is the unspeakable boon of one day's rest in seven ever to reach the toiling millions of the country? It is only by the patient and sympathetic application of the law of Christ to individual cases in the course of a considerate and enlightened Church discipline that we can hope to solve these and other like difficulties.

It is difficult to characterise with accuracy the prevalent type of Christianity which we find on our mission field. There is a great deal of simple faith, of belief in prayer, and there is at least a very frequent acknowledgment, if not a very profound sense, of the working of the Holy Spirit. The great defect, which probably all missionaries in China feel, is the lack in the native Church of a keen sense of sin. This, of course, is not surprising. The whole past history of the Chinese mind has been hostile to the growth of any adequate conception of sin. The natural conscience has not, of course, lost wholly its appreciation of the distinctions between right and wrong, but sin in the Christian sense, and still more an adequate conception of the guilt of sin, are things wholly unknown to the non-Christian Chinese, and which only come very slowly to the consciousness even of the Christians. I

have said that new converts are generally brought in by the example and the testimony of native Christians in private life, and so far as their conversion is a matter of doctrinal conviction, I believe experience shows that the great majority of those who accept the Christian faith do so, not because of conviction of personal sin, but because they have grasped the idea of the obvious helplessness of the idols, and the folly rather than the sin of worshipping them. From this position they attain to some knowledge and belief in the living and true God, but they seem seldom to realise that their long alienation from Him has involved any guilt. They have committed a mistake, perhaps; they have been unhappily left in the dark; but now that they have come to know God the past is perhaps too easily forgotten, and there is perhaps a too superficial gladness in their new possession of the truth, which leads them away from that kind of self-questioning which might have led them to a deeper sense of sin. This state of mind has its advantages and its drawbacks. On the one hand, it gives a freshness, simplicity, and freedom to their testimony for the Gospel. They have no tendency to make the way of salvation seem hard to those who are outside. They reduce the Gospel to its simplest elements, and seek to lead men to it by the easiest paths. It may be that this is a right and needful stage in the early history of a Christian Church, but we who have been brought up in an older Christian life often long to see a deeper conception of spiritual things, and a larger sense of what is involved in the stupendous transition from death to life. One is often tempted to ask what the Christian religion is as it presents itself to the consciousness of many of our Christian people in China. Occasional utterances on their part give one glimpses of a system of Christian ideas some of which are strange enough, and many of which, though true and sound in themselves, differ widely as regards emphasis and balance from the Christian

system as it presents itself to our minds. Hence arises the profoundly interesting question how Christian life and theology are likely to develop themselves in a young Church like that of China, growing up amongst a people who are themselves the outcome of an ancient civilisation and intellectual life. Of course, the individual Christian in the early days of the Church reflects in many ways the teaching of his teachers. This again lays a heavy responsibility upon every missionary. We are there to teach the Word of God; to implant in their minds ideas which are to be the universal possession of all God's people. We are perhaps hardly aware how much our own national temperament, our own up-bringing, and the schools of theology from which we come, tend to shape and colour our teaching. It requires a constant effort of watchfulness to see to it that we offer to those under our care the pure, uncoloured, universal essence of our Lord's teaching, and not the essentially Scottish or Western theology and Gospel.

This is one reason why in our mission we attach so much importance to the education of the Christian children, and to giving a somewhat thorough training to our catechists and preachers. In this way a class of men is being raised up who have a well-grounded knowledge of Christian truth, and whose intellectual life is at the same time so disciplined that we may hope to see them thinking independently, and shaping for themselves their own theological conceptions. It is in the earliest stages of Christian teaching that the chief danger arises of the teacher imposing himself and his ideas too completely upon the taught; but where the process is carried further, one hopes more and more to see a healthy reaction of the pupil's mind upon the matter of the teaching supplied to him. The method in which our native Church is organised will also, we hope, tend towards the same result. From the beginning Church

work is put as largely as possible into the hands of competent natives. We have not imported a whole system of ecclesiastical organisation and discipline from the West. We find ourselves no doubt continually guided and helped by Western experience, and most of all by that of the Scottish Presbyterian Church; but we have sought to frame the organisation gradually, not to satisfy the demands of theory, but to meet practical needs as they arise. At every step the methods adopted are shaped and moulded by the advice and opinions of native brethren. Thus, for example, in Swatow we have been able to frame and carry on now for seventeen years a fairly complete Church organisation, which is Presbyterian in its form and methods, and yet essentially a Chinese body. It is moreover a working Church without as yet any creed or formula such as our own Confession of Faith. Our Church history at home is apt to lead men to suppose that the Church is based on its confession, and perhaps many of our difficulties in ecclesiastical questions arise out of this displacement of our fundamental ideas. In our Chinese Church, on the other hand, the Church comes first; and while it is very probable that we shall eventually be led to formulate a doctrinal confession, this will not be done because we feel such a document to be a fundamental necessity for the existence of the Church of Christ. It will be formulated only when circumstances arise to make it a needful instrument for the Church's use. We hope to keep before us the idea that the doctrinal confession shall exist for the Church, and not the Church for the confession.

A review of earlier Church history would show how the varying types of different races have contributed to the development of Christian theology. The Greek mind contributed to it its speculative liberality, its profound philosophical insight, its sense of the essential dignity of human nature. The Roman type of mental development

contributed, on the other hand, the strong sense of law out of which has arisen the whole region of what is called forensic theology. It also imposed on Christian thought definiteness, and the sense of limits which prevented it from running wild in a too free speculation. In later times the subtlety, thoroughness, and clearness of the French intellectual type, when working at its best, impressed themselves through Calvin upon our Western theology. When time has allowed for their development, may we not expect the working of similar forces in the Churches which are growing up on our great mission fields? In India you have a mind naturally religious highly speculative and metaphysical, and moving habitually under the influence of sudden heats of religious emotion. In China, on the contrary, you have a national temperament with little natural sympathy with the more subtle aspects of religious thought, but strongly inclined to what is ethical and practical, having a firm grasp of reality, and presenting a singular combination of solidity and plasticity. Where our theology is still one-sided and incomplete, may we not look for large contributions to it in days to come from the independent thought and life of Christian men in our mission fields; and may we not look forward to the attainment, as one of the ample rewards of our mission work, of the fuller and more rounded theology for which the Church has waited so long? So may come at last the healing of those divisions by which she has been torn and weakened throughout her chequered history.

When to Jewish fervour, Greek passion, Roman restraint, French acuteness, German depth, English breadth, Scottish intensity, and American alertness, are added Indian religious subtlety, with Chinese ethical sagacity—all baptised into the One Spirit—then we may reach at last the fuller theology, worthy of the world-wide hospitalities of the kingdom of heaven, and setting forth more nearly the very thoughts of God.

LECTURE XI

EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

So far I have tried to give you a continuous view of the genesis and features of mission work as viewed from the inside, and as conditioned by the social and religious conditions around it. I must now call your attention to some of the external relations and aspects of mission work.

The Christian Church in China occupies a peculiar position, which is due to the attitude of the Chinese Government to religions generally, and to Christianity in particular. You will remember that under the Chinese Constitution an arrangement has grown up by which Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, mutually contradictory though they are in their essential nature, not only co-exist side by side, but are all formally recognised, one might almost say established, by the Government; while at the same time under Government sanction a continual criticism is maintained against the Buddhist and Taoist superstitions. This anomalous state of things points to the fact referred to at an earlier stage, that the Chinese mind does not seem to feel keenly on religious subjects. We cannot say that there is no religious sense, but religion is regarded more from its ethical and practical side, with a singular absence of anything like fanaticism or religious bigotry. What is called Confucianism, which I may remind you existed long before Confucius, is in a sense the sole official religion. According to this view Buddhism and Taoism are always represented as baseless superstitions which have crept into the popular mind, and which are to be tolerated and recognised only from a paternal regard to the weakness of the popular intelli-

gence, and the strength of their devotion to these religions. The popular religion is treated not with regard to its truth or falsehood, but only on the ground of its practical usefulness, or its probable dangers to civil order and public peace. In short, the attitude of the Chinese Government to religions generally is very similar to that of the Roman Empire. For example, the Emperor Antoninus, in a communication to the Common Assembly of Asia, refers to complaints made against the Christians of that time, and the persecutions to which they had been subjected, and then continues thus: "Concerning such persons, some others also of the governors of provinces wrote to my most divine father (that is, the previous Emperor), to whom he replied that they should not at all disturb such persons, unless they were found to be attempting anything against the Roman Government. And to myself many have sent intimations regarding such persons, to whom I also replied in pursuance of my father's judgment. But if anyone has a matter to bring against any person of this class, merely as such, let the accused be acquitted of the charge, but let the accuser be amenable to justice." So also the Chinese Government has made no claim to control the consciences of its people. They are at liberty to profess any religion they please, so long as they keep within the bounds of the law and do nothing against the state. The difficulties with which Christianity has had to contend in its early history in China have chiefly been those due to its appearing as a foreign religion and being propagated by foreigners. The traditional policy of China has been one of the utmost exclusiveness. Possessing a vast territory whose produce is amply sufficient for the support of its population, they felt no need of foreign intercourse, and from early times have been accustomed to despise all foreigners. They were familiar with barbarous tribes on the outskirts of their Empire, and took for granted that

these adequately represented the civilisation of all foreign nations. One of their historians speaks of these neighbouring barbarous tribes in this way: "The former kings in measuring out the land put the Imperial territory in the centre. Inside was the Chinese Empire, and outside were the barbarous nations. The barbarians are covetous and greedy of gain. Their hair hangs down over their bodies, and their coats are buttoned on the left side. They have human faces, but the hearts of beasts. They are distinguished from the natives of the Empire both by their manners and their dress. They differ both in their customs and their food, and in language they are mutually unintelligible. . . . On this account the ancient sage kings treated them like birds and beasts. They did not contract treaties, nor did they attack them. To form a treaty is simply to spend treasure and to be deceived; to attack them is simply to wear out the troops and provoke raids. . . . Thus the outer are not to be brought inside. They must be held at a distance, avoiding familiarity. . . . If they show a leaning towards right principles and present tributary offerings they should be treated with a yielding etiquette; but bridling and repression must never be relaxed for conforming to circumstance. Such was the constant principle of the sage monarchs in ruling and controlling the barbarian tribes." Unfortunately these were the principles on which China took her stand when in modern times intercourse with Western nations began to be forced upon her. It was, if possible, still more unfortunate that Western commerce in its early years consisted so largely of the disastrous trade in opium. This gave no little justification to the pre-conceived idea on which the Chinese were proceeding, that foreign intercourse was a calamity to be dreaded rather than a boon to be welcomed. Hence the misunderstandings and disputes which led to the first opium war in the year 1842. The phrase

"opium war" has often been criticised on the ground that the war was not one which arose upon the question of excluding opium from the Chinese ports, but was rendered inevitable by the haughtiness and assumption with which the Chinese treated foreign nations. It is undoubtedly true that these ignorant assumptions rendered impossible a peaceful solution of the difficulty; but it is not less true that the well-founded Chinese objection to the admission of opium to her ports, and the determination, on the other hand, of the British Government not to relinquish this source of gain, lay at the bottom of the quarrel. This war was brought to a close in 1842 by the treaty of Nankin, by which China ceded to Great Britain the island of Hong-kong, and threw open to foreign trade and residence the ports of Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo, and Shanghai. A second war was closed in 1858 by the treaty of Tientsin, by which the additional ports of Tientsin, Newchwang, Chefoo, Taiwan (that is Formosa), Swatow, and Kiangchow, were thrown open in the same way. This was followed by the opening of a number of others on later occasions. It was the opening of these ports which gave entrance for Christian missions on Chinese soil; but the circumstances connected with the opening of these doors were in many ways to be deeply regretted. The Christian Church was ready to welcome eagerly this opportunity of access to the great populations of China, and it was inevitable and right that the utmost use should be made of the opportunities thus afforded. But in the eyes of the Chinese Government the Christian religion has never been wholly dissociated from the hostile and, in their view, immoral action of the British Government.

When these ports were thrown open to the trade and residence of foreigners, it was necessary to make arrangements for the adjusting of disputes and the government of these foreigners who thus became resident on Chinese soil. It was impossible that they should be subjected to the

barbarism of Chinese law, and it was arranged that they should be subjected to the law of their own countries, administered by resident consuls. Thus was established what is called the doctrine of extra-territoriality, which is observed also in Turkey and in other places where the subjects of civilised powers reside within the bounds of semi-barbarous nations.

In the treaties agreed to between China and Western powers, distinct reference was made to the subject of Christianity, and it was provided that under these treaties there should be complete freedom for the propagation or practice of Christianity, both on the part of natives and foreigners. This provision, as well as the natural attitude always maintained by the Chinese Government towards differing religions, has secured for us marvellous freedom in preaching Christianity in all parts of China; and not only in the treaty ports, where foreign residence is sanctioned, but in all the cities, towns, and country districts of the Empire, native preachers and foreign missionaries alike have complete freedom in preaching the Gospel and gathering Christian worshippers; a freedom, perhaps, which is more complete than that which is enjoyed in any other part of the globe. Now it is under such conditions as these I have described that the Christian religion has been preached and the Christian Church planted in China, and many complicated results have grown out of this situation.

The toleration clause of the treaties runs as follows:— "The religions of the Lord of heaven and of Jesus teach men to practise virtue, and to do to others as men would be done by, and all persons shall be free to preach and practise these religions without molestation or interference." This seems to secure the right, on the one hand, of missionaries to preach Christianity, and the right on the other, of Chinese converts to follow their teaching. But these rights are not precisely defined, nor is any

definite provision made for securing them ; but since the clause formed part of an international arrangement regulating the respective rights of Chinese and foreigners in their relations with each other, it seemed to give the missionary the right, enjoyed in other spheres by the merchant, of appealing to his consul in all cases where the treaty was violated. In this way the missionary was constituted in some sense the natural protector of the right of religious toleration conceded to Chinese subjects by their own government.

It is no easy task to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of this arrangement. We are profoundly thankful to God that in His providence we have had secured to us the fullest recognition of our right to preach the Gospel throughout the Empire, and to enjoy the protection of the law for life and property in doing so. We are not less thankful that the Church, in the days of its weakness and inexperience, is spared the ordeal of fiery persecution by a hostile and determined government. It is a marvellous thing that every Chinese subject who hears the Gospel, under the peace established by the treaties, has his rights recognised to worship God according to his conscience. In this way the Church has been to a large extent sheltered during its years of weakness, and time has been given for its growth in numbers, in influence, and what is more important, in intelligent comprehension of the truth, and in the faith and courage which spring from enlarged experience of the Christian life.

But these great gains are not without their drawbacks. In India it seems undoubtedly an evil that notwithstanding the official neutrality of the British Government, it yet inevitably appears to the native mind that Christianity comes among them backed by all the authority and influence of the ruling power. The Hindoo hearer of the Gospel, belonging to a race that is naturally weak and pliant as compared with the sturdy independence

of the Chinese, sees that the keys of advancement and the springs of power are in Christian hands, and he is tempted to seek favour by compliance with the religion of his superiors, while the stronger minds may be driven all the more to hold aloof. In China it is a distinct advantage that those who profess Christianity know well that they will not ingratiate themselves with the government by doing so. The new religion is preached by despised aliens, and those who follow it incur a kind of social ostracism by connecting themselves with it. This tends to deter the insincere, and secure the purity of the Church.

It is therefore an undeniable disadvantage that another set of ideas has been fostered by the treaty arrangements. The ill-defined right of toleration is enjoyed by the Christians under pressure from foreign governments. They thus appear to stand apart from the bulk of their fellow-countrymen, and to be under a foreign protectorate. So much is this the case that in official documents a sharp distinction is most unwisely but most persistently made by the Chinese authorities between Christians and Chinese subjects. If they are persecuted the missionary has the right and may consider it his duty to report the matter to his consul; the consul, in turn, makes representations to the local authorities or to their superiors, and endeavours to secure official protection and redress for the persecuted native Christians.

To appreciate adequately the elements of danger in these proceedings, it is necessary to consider the normal condition of Chinese society. In China we have, as I have said in an earlier lecture, a crowded population busily engaged in industrial pursuits, and the struggle for life is keen. The whole structure of society is based on the clan system. In the south of China, whole villages often consist of persons who are all of one surname. And even where this is not the case, the bonds of hereditary relationship are clearly recognised, and determine the

relations of different sections of society. Every man knows his own place in the system, and holds it with the utmost tenacity. For his own safety he will, as a rule, both in regard to person and property, carefully avoid infringing the rights of others, and he will not less jealously guard his own. Villages, clans, branches of clans, and individuals, are commonly classified as either "strong" or "weak." The distinction is looked upon as a vitally essential one, and all social movements and local rivalries are regarded from this point of view. It is difficult to define precisely the elements of this much coveted social "strength." Wealth, numbers, and individual ability all enter into it, and notably the possession within the circle of relationship, of literary graduates. A graduate has the right of access to local magistrates, and is exempt from corporal punishment at their hands. He is also by training competent to draw up petitions and complaints, and his experience in dealing with such matters gives him in the course of years a fairly extensive acquaintance with the intricacies of Chinese law. Society in all its sections is thus divided into two camps, which are described relatively as the "strong" and the "weak," although the preponderance of strength may pass at intervals from the one to the other. Even when the relations of these two camps are not those of active hostility to each other, they are at best only those of an armed neutrality. Besides, there are amongst them ancestral feuds and unsettled disputes and questions of all kinds which, when they are quiescent, are only slumbering, and ready on the smallest occasion to break out with fresh violence. They continually lead to bitter and prolonged litigation, and not infrequently to reckless destruction of property and bloodshed.

Into this mass of inflammable material comes the missionary, not only preaching a new doctrine, but also planting in the heart of it a new society. Although a

stranger, he is seen to come and go at his pleasure, and acts with an independence which few natives dare assume. He is soon surrounded by numbers of hearers and converts, and has with him native preachers who are often men of some education and ability. It is vaguely known that China has entered into stipulations with foreign powers, conferring privileges of uncertain significance upon the missionary and his converts. The new movement is watched with the utmost interest by the two camps, into which local society is everywhere divided. The "strong," jealous of any new force, usually make up their mind to oppose the Christian movement. As the influential heads of local society they usually have in their hands the control of local funds for religious purposes, and the management of the public religious observances. They are the natural guardians and regulators of the ancestral religion and worship, and from their social position and local influence they are on terms of more or less intimacy with the magistrates of the neighbourhood. Under all these grounds they are naturally led to pose as protectors of society from innovation. The camp of the "weak," on the other hand, probably smarting under their recollection of a long series of defeats at the hands of the "strong," are biding their time in the hope of securing redress and revenge, and incline to welcome the new movement and to associate themselves with it, in the hope of finding new and powerful allies who may throw their weight into the balance of power, and turn it in their favour. They therefore come in large numbers and do their best to turn their newly established Christian society into a cave of Adullam, in which may be found everyone that is in distress and everyone that is in debt, and everyone that is discontented. The missionary, if inexperienced in dealing with such movements, is gratified by the large numbers who gather regularly for Christian worship, and who listen

patiently to his preaching; but most missionaries early learn to view extensive movements of this kind with a very watchful eye, and refuse to take the professions made by many of these apparent converts at their face value.

Presently, perhaps, a cause of quarrel between one of the adherents of the "strong" party and one of the adherents of the "weak" occurs. It is promptly reported to the missionary as a case of persecution in which the old party of the "strong" are using their strength in order to terrorise and injure those who have recently begun to make the profession of Christianity. It is to be remembered that the persons who bring these complaints before the missionary, though professedly Christian worshippers, are not yet to be regarded as in any sense Christians. Some of them may be more or less under the influence of the truth to which they have begun to listen, but they are still at heart members of a heathen society, and have brought with them a long working acquaintance with its ways and wiles. It is not surprising, therefore, that they are careful to adapt the facts, with the characteristic Chinese skill, to the missionary's point of view. Old grounds of quarrel are kept out of sight, and the action complained of is made to appear a sudden outburst of heathen hostility to the Christian religion. They eagerly urge that the missionary should take up the quarrel of his converts, that he should represent it to the foreign consul, and through him to the native authorities, and do his utmost to put all the powers of the law in operation for the redress of the wrong and the securing of religious liberty. To an inexperienced missionary this appeal is always a strong one, and even after long experience we are apt to allow it more weight than it deserves. In nine cases out of ten the real truth is, that the so-called convert being now associated with a movement which seems in his eyes a vigorous and promising one, has presumed on the

strength of this alliance to pay off some of his old grudges or to carry matters with a high hand towards those of whom he had been formerly in fear. The retaliation which he has thus provoked is in no sense an act of religious persecution. It is simply, as already remarked, the last chapter of what is probably a long story with many vicissitudes of mutual wrongs and reprisals. But it is extremely difficult for the missionary, even with the help of his native assistants, to arrive at the real facts of the case. All concerned combine dexterously to hide from him everything that would bring the real history to light. The weakness and helplessness of the Christian body amongst the overwhelming numbers of the heathen around is painted in vivid colours. The missionary is plied with the text about sheep that have no shepherd, and dire disaster to the Christian cause is prophesied if the missionary should prove himself so lacking in Christian charity as to decline to take up vigorously the cause of the weak and oppressed. Baffled in his search for the ultimate facts of the matter; wearied with the clamorous insistency with which it is pressed upon his notice; and perhaps needlessly touched by highly coloured tales of suffering that are told him, many a missionary has been induced to take up cases of this kind, and represent them to the authorities. His doing so is but the signal for a series of incidents whose united effect is almost invariably disastrous. Should he fail in carrying his point, the weakness of the Christian community is rendered vividly apparent, and all the hostile elements acquire new force and bearing. Should he on the other hand succeed in securing redress for the Christian sufferer, and the punishment of those who wrong or appear to wrong him, no good object is attained. On the contrary, the sufferer is rendered doubly rash and presumptuous. Others of the converts are encouraged to follow his example, and act so as to

provoke further violence; the great body of native society outside the Christian movement is irritated into a permanent hostility; while the magistrates who have been called in to deal with the affair bitterly resent the interference of a foreign consul with native matters, and with a shrewdness born of long experience and deep knowledge of their own people, are often able to see what is perhaps essentially true, that instead of being forced to secure religious liberty, they have only been made the unwilling instruments of a manifest injustice. At the same time the success, such as it is, of the missionary's appeal to authority, brings about him still larger numbers of those who have wrongs to right or axes to grind. The whole Christian movement is turned into the most undesirable directions.

I find this process illustrated in a letter by a brother missionary of the Church Missionary Society, written from Central China. "The attitude of the officials towards Christianity, or rather the foreign powers which (from their point of view) send Christianity, has quite changed, and they appear now inclined to give most to those who ask most noisily. At present these seem to be the Roman Catholics, who, by means of French gunboats, have secured the dismissal of a district magistrate, and the freedom from arrest for three years of the reputed guilty man he was trying to punish. The impression, rightly or wrongly, has got abroad that anyone with a 'business,' who makes it worth the catechist's while, can get it taken up by the French priest in the Yamen as a case of persecution. No doubt many of our inquirers come to us with the same object in view, and many more in order to escape the wiles of these Roman Catholic protégés. There have been about six cases of trouble with them, two of which we have left alone, our men being only very recent inquirers; three we have settled in a personal interview with M. L.; and one, in which

a Christian named Chihsing had his hand injured permanently, besides other ill-treatment, still remains unsettled. All this has brought us between two fires. The consul, who paid a visit to T'ai-chow in connection with an attack by Roman Catholic converts on those of the China Inland Mission, and the ensuing free fight, has blamed the missionaries all round for lending too credulous ears, and giving too much aid to the native Christians; while the senior native pastor here has sent in his resignation in great measure by way of protest against our unwillingness to write to the officials on their behalf, where the case is not clearly one of persecution against Christianity."

I may give you from my own experience another recent example of the dangerous elements with which we have to deal. I am afraid the story tells rather heavily against one of our preachers, but as I wish to give you a perfectly candid view of what is met with on the mission field, there is no good reason why I should not tell you the story. It illustrates several aspects of Chinese life. It is the story of a quarrel, and, like most Chinese stories, begins very far back, and, like most Chinese quarrels, it rises out of a grave.

The District City of Pu-ning, with its suburbs, is divided between the two powerful clans of Li and Fang. They have had many disputes between themselves, and each of them has had many quarrels with the surrounding villages. For a long time the villagers from all the district round have been obliged to bring their local produce to market in the city of Pu-ning. They have in consequence been subjected to endless exactions on the part of the Fang clan, who control the city, and even terrorise the district magistrate. They have made repeated efforts to establish independent markets in the villages, but the influence of the Fang clan has sufficed to defeat all these movements. This influence was greatly increased about twenty-five years ago by the rapid rise to

fame and position of a member of the family, who by his energy and ability rose in the military service to the rank of general, and was afterwards appointed imperial commissioner, with very exceptional powers for putting down rebellious movements, and extirpating gangs of robbers, all over the north-eastern part of the Canton province. During the Chinese war with France, he was appointed commander of all the land and sea forces for the defence of the whole province. The name of General Fang became a terror to all the people in our district. His spies were everywhere, and his method of executing justice or injustice was both rough and ready. In the course of some twenty years' administration of his post, he is credited with beheading some eight or nine thousand offenders. Numbering a man of such exceptional power as one of themselves, the Fang clan became more and more violent and oppressive in their treatment of all other sections of their district. General Fang adjusted for a time the disputed question of markets, but after his death in 1891, these slumbering quarrels broke out again with renewed violence. Hence, for a number of years, all round Pu-ning city there has been either open actual feud, or at least a slumbering hostility between the villages of the surrounding country and the people of the city itself. Many persons from different villages of that district have for a number of years back been coming to worship at our station of Mienfu, where we have a congregation of some two hundred members under the care of a native minister. The number of worshippers there having increased out of all proportion to the accommodation available for them, efforts were made to provide a place of worship in the city of Pu-ning or the neighbourhood. Many efforts in this direction failed, but at length a piece of ground was purchased close to the city walls. To our occupation of this site local opposition was raised, and after prolonged discussion the prefect

from Chao-chow-foo was sent as a special commissioner to settle the dispute. Dealing with the case on Chinese principles, he decided that the seller of the ground in question had no sufficient title to the land, and called upon us to give it up; but, balancing matters in the way that is dear to the Chinese official mind, he at the same time gave us for nothing a piece of waste land, which, having been confiscated for some default of taxes, was held as Government property. This, however, he judiciously selected at an inconvenient distance from the city, so that we hesitated to make use of it for the purpose for which it was intended. Encouraged perhaps by the partial success with which we had conducted this struggle with the mandarins and the clans of Pu-ning city, large numbers of people in the villages on the east side of the city added themselves to the already considerable number of Christian worshippers. They borrowed from the headmen of one village a school which was village property, with permission to use it as a place of worship; and I remember spending one long Sunday in preaching there to a crowd of four or five hundred persons, who both filled the inside of the building and crowded around it on the outside. I have every reason to believe that some of these people were sincere worshippers and inquirers after truth, but we also know that many of them came from very different motives. It is at this point the story I wish to tell you really begins.

Two men in a distant village claimed to possess a field with a grave in the centre of it, at a distance of some ten miles from the school which was thus occupied. The grave, they said, was that of their maternal great-grand-aunt, or of some other of their kindred of equally attenuated relationship, which for the purpose of a Chinese quarrel may be treated as one of the closest and most binding forces. This grave was sold without their knowledge to the wealthiest member of the Fang clan. His

influence, however, was not at this time so great as formerly, the general having died some years before. The fraudulent seller of the grave was a man of no position belonging to still another village lying quite away from the scene of the greater part of these transactions. The purchaser, Mr Fang, went to visit his newly acquired property. It is alleged that he broke open the grave, and dug up the coffin; that these were afterwards restored by their proper owner; whereupon Mr Fang not only destroyed the grave, but broke up the coffin and hid the bones. While these proceedings were going on, the two men who claimed to be the real proprietors of the grave and professed devoted attachment to their maternal great-grand-aunt, joined themselves to the Christian movement, in the hope of securing its influence for the vindication of their alleged and possibly imaginary rights. Among the several hundred worshippers to whom they joined themselves, there were not a few of a class who are always ready to join in any dispute of this kind for the sake of the excitement and possible gains which it might yield. Our preacher in charge, though he had been for many years in our employment, was not one of those in whom we could have much confidence. A man of considerable shrewdness and energy, he had repeatedly shown himself deficient in Christian temper, and too ready to lend himself to unworthy influences and movements, and to make use of doubtful measures of worldly wisdom for promoting, as he considered, the interests of the Church. He too easily listened to the story told him about the rifled grave, and set out one morning, accompanied by four or five of the worshippers, to make inquiries into the matter. Going to the village of the alleged fraudulent seller, he failed to find him. He was told that the buyer, Mr Fang, had been there a short time before, and was at that moment in a boat not far off, on his way back to the city. The preacher and his friends followed and over-

took him on the river at a place some three miles distant from the borrowed school. Of what happened at this point two accounts are extant, and as is usually the case in Chinese stories, neither of them is strictly true. The truth is usually a *tertium quid*, which one must construct for himself. By the preacher's account, he and his friends sat in Mr Fang's boat, conversing with him upon what had taken place, and urging him to right the wrong which he had done to the real owners of the grave. He then agreed to accompany them to the school, and to send for all the parties concerned in the sale in order to have the matter amicably settled. According to Mr Fang's account, an armed force of seventy or eighty persons, with the preacher at the head of them, violently seized him and his companions, and with much violence and many insults compelled them to accompany them to the school, and there made use of further violence and threats to compel him to yield to their wishes. This story the preacher denied, assuring us that he had not more than four or five persons with him, and that they acted throughout in a peaceful and reasonable manner. The real truth of the matter, so far as we could ascertain it by much inquiry, seems to have been that whilst the preacher was indeed accompanied by only four or five others, there was a considerable number of other persons interested in the matter in dispute who watched the proceedings from some little distance, and were prepared to take a more active part in them if necessity should arise. In any case, by moral suasion and pressure, if not by physical violence, Mr Fang was brought to the schoolhouse, and whilst he was sitting there being refreshed with a cup of tea, one of the worshippers endeavoured to bring him to a pliable condition of mind by rattling chains in an alarming manner on the further side of a thin wooden partition. After some discussion he was allowed to withdraw to a friend's house in the neighbourhood, promising that he

would send for the parties and settle the dispute. Instead of doing so he secretly sent a messenger to the district magistrate, giving a highly exaggerated account of the violence which he had suffered, and entreating the magistrate to come with a sufficient force to deliver him out of the hands of his enemies. The result was the appearance on the scene next morning of the civil and military magistrates from the District City with a considerable force of troops, and a large following of promiscuous rabble, along with a number of the heads of the Fang clan. The preacher appeared before the magistrate and explained matters from his point of view. For some little time it seemed as if the old feud between the city and the villages would break out again on the spot, both parties being highly excited and arms on both sides being ready to hand. Happily, however, matters were adjusted peaceably for the moment, the magistrate returned to the city with Mr Fang under his protection, and the crowds scattered to their homes. The next step was a formal accusation lodged with the district magistrate by Mr Fang, not, however, against the preacher who was the alleged leader in the violence done to him, nor against the owners of the grave in whose interests this violence was done, but against a third party, who, to Western minds, would seem to have had no connection with the matter whatever. These were the heads of the village which owned the school which was lent to the Christians. The Fang clan seemed to shrink from putting themselves in conflict directly with the body of Christians, whom they might suppose to be under the protection of the foreign missionaries. The owners of the grave were too insignificant to be worth proceeding against, and what seemed to them the best course was to make this new quarrel an incident in the old feud between city and village. They therefore charged the headmen who had lent the school with getting up a mob and using violence against Mr

Fang. Fearing that in some way foreign influence would be brought into the dispute, they came to Swatow and lodged a petition with the British consul, requesting him to instruct the missionaries to restrain their preacher from any further action in the matter. The consul referred the petitioners to us, and afterwards, in consultation with us, he replied to the petition that the whole matter was a purely Chinese dispute which fell to be dealt with by the native authorities according to law.

In the meantime one of the headmen of the village, an old man of eighty, having gone to Pu-ning city to attend the market, was seized in the streets by some members of the Fang clan, handed over to the magistrate, and beaten and imprisoned by him without the formality of either accusation, trial or sentence. Later, other two men connected with the village suffered the same fate. The missionaries' relation to the whole matter was by this time not a little complicated. Our view was that the dispute was one with which we properly had nothing whatever to do. The view of the Fang clan was that we would, as a matter of course, support the so-called Christians in all their actions, but that we would naturally be indifferent to the fate of the non-Christian headmen, against whom therefore they directed their hostility. We felt that our preacher, though by no means guilty of the outrages attributed to him, had made a serious mistake, to say the least of it, and given occasion to the enemies of the Church to regard him as implicated in many lawless proceedings. Naturally our first impulse was to remove him from the post in which this blunder had been made, if not to dismiss him altogether from mission employment. But in dealing with the case we had to remember that all our actions were being closely watched by the vigilant and powerful clan of the Fangs. They were evidently willing enough to avoid a quarrel with us, but were extremely eager to fasten one upon the non-

Christian headmen. We could not, therefore, in view of their hostile attitude, at once remove the preacher or indicate too plainly our displeasure at his conduct. We had no wish whatever to protect or assist the original owners of the grave in question who had been the occasion of all this trouble, but we felt bound to do our utmost to support the headmen of the village who had been kind enough to lend their school as a place of Christian worship. It was only justice to them that we should not suffer them to be involved in any danger on account of their kindness to us, and it also concerned our credit throughout the countryside that we should not seem in case of difficulty arising to be indifferent to the interests of those who had befriended us. Besides, the native Church was watching us, and would draw their own inferences from the way in which we dealt with the case. In circumstances like these a missionary is compelled to face the apparently insoluble problem of being at once tortuous and straightforward in his actions. Correspondence between the consul and the native authorities led to little result, but in the course of it we had the opportunity of pressing upon the attention of the authorities an aspect of the case which the Fang clan were very eager to have ignored. The disturbance of a grave in China is not merely looked upon as a violation of the rights of property; it touches most closely the almost sacred system of ancestral worship. We found, on examining the Chinese legal code, most express and severe condemnation of crimes of this sort. The punishment for opening a grave belonging to another so that the coffin should be exposed, is death by strangling; for opening the coffin so that the body is exposed, death by decapitation, which to the Chinese mind is a much severer punishment, because carrying with it the consequence of headless existence in a future life. Influenced, no doubt, by the knowledge that he was liable to this charge, Mr Fang conveyed to

us privately an intimation that he was not unwilling to arrange some compromise, but competent men whom we deputed to meet with him and his friends failed in their efforts. They found him willing to arrange matters, but his clansmen were eager to push the quarrel against the village to the bitter end, and even stoned Mr Fang's house to show their disapproval of his willingness to yield. In this way months passed by, until a native merchant in Swatow, who had some acquaintance with the Fang clan, voluntarily offered his services as intermediary. After much negotiation an arrangement was come to. The Fang clan at first demanded a penalty which was to consist of a play to be performed and a feast to be given at the expense of the village headmen, and a written confession and apology to be made by them for the insult suffered by Mr Fang. We insisted that the penalty, whatever it should be, must be paid by the owners of the grave, who were the real parties implicated, and that the village headmen must be held entirely free of blame. This of course was manifest justice, and besides we were aware that by coming to any settlement which might seem to admit that blame rested on the village headmen, they would be in danger of an accusation before the mandarins in future. On this point turned the main difficulty in the way of a settlement. We explained further that we could not use our influence even with the owners of the grave to offer a play, as it is our constant practice to teach all the worshippers to abstain from either attending plays or contributing to them. We also pointed out that if these men had rendered themselves justly liable to a penalty for insulting Mr Fang, he, on the other hand, had been guilty of a very serious offence, rendering him liable even to an accusation on a capital charge, by his interference with the grave. At length it was agreed that for disturbing the grave Mr Fang should pay the real owners a penalty of seventy dollars; that for wounding his feelings, they

on their part, should pay a fine of twenty dollars in lieu of play and feast, and that they would present a written apology, on condition that it passed through our hands and the terms of it were approved by us. The money was to be passed through the hands of the consul, that he might be fully aware of the terms of the settlement. When all was on the point of final adjustment, we found the draft of the written apology demanded by Mr Fang was made to read as an apology made by the heads of the village, whose entire freedom from complicity in the affair we had consistently asserted from the first. They assured us that this was a mere matter of form, and the intermediary begged us to yield the point as a personal courtesy to himself. On this, however, our decision was immovable, and the other party finally yielding and consenting to accept an apology from the owners of the grave, this quarrel of several months' duration was at length adjusted. It was, of course, a further condition of this settlement, that the intermediary, with the assistance of the Fang clan, should set free the headman and the others who were still in prison, although never brought to trial, and that they should do so without expense to these victims of a manifest injustice.

I believe that our action in this case convinced the Fang clan that we would neither support professing Christians in any acts of disorder or violence, nor would consent on grounds of expediency to transfer blame attachable to them to the shoulders of innocent outsiders. We also convinced the large numbers of professing worshippers that we would not deviate from what we considered right in order to gratify them or attract their patronage to the Christian cause. Not a few of those who had joined themselves to the Christian movement at an earlier stage now withdrew, not finding in it the thoroughgoing and unscrupulous assistance for which they had hoped. We endeavoured to confirm this impression by

returning a sum of thirty dollars contributed by one of them for the building of a place of worship in the neighbourhood. We did so because we found that he was a debtor in default for large sums, for the recovery of which he was under prosecution, and his chief motive in connecting himself with us appeared to be the desire to avoid payment. The new place of worship, however, was built without opposition; and the large number of professing worshippers being thus to some extent winnowed of undesirable elements, we hope that the Church in that neighbourhood is now established upon solid foundations, with a better understanding on the part of all concerned as to what are the real motives and objects of the Christian movement.

From this somewhat intricate story you may gather how many dangers and unforeseen complications sometimes attend the planting of the Church in new districts. These dangers are largely connected with the somewhat ambiguous rights conferred upon missionaries and their converts by the toleration clauses in the treaties with foreign powers. Our rights under these clauses may sometimes be rightly used to avert serious dangers; but they may also by a little indiscretion, or through lack of appreciation of local circumstances, be used in ways that work only evil. In the missions of the Church of Rome they are systematically, and I am afraid one must say unscrupulously, used for the gathering in of large numbers of nominal converts, whose only claim to the Christian name is their registration in lists kept by native catechists, in which they are entered on payment of a small fee, without regard to their possession of any degree of Christian knowledge or character. In the event of their being involved in any dispute or lawsuit, the native catechists or priests, and even the foreign missionaries, take up their cause and press it upon the native magistrates. Not unfrequently a still worse course is

pursued. Intimation is sent round the villages in which there are large numbers of so-called Catholic converts, and these assemble under arms to support by force the feuds of their co-religionists. The consequence is that the Catholic missions in southern China, and I believe in the north also, are bitterly hated both by the Chinese people and by their magistrates. By terrorising both magistrates and people, they have secured in many places a large amount of apparent popularity; but they are sowing the seeds of a harvest of hatred and bitterness which may be reaped in deplorable forms in years to come.

On the other hand, some Protestant missionaries have laid down the rule that we should teach our converts to rely simply on the protection of God, refusing them any assistance when they are wronged or persecuted. To claim for them protection under the toleration clause is spoken of as teaching them to rely on the arm of flesh, and it is represented to be much safer and better for the spirituality of the Church to refuse to use the rights which we are admitted under the treaties to possess.

Now it will undoubtedly simplify the missionary's course in many cases to have an unalterable rule that he will on no consideration appeal to the foreign consul or native mandarin for the protection of Christian converts; but solutions of such extreme simplicity are seldom the right ones. We cannot dissociate ourselves from the fact that we are members of a nation whose Christian civilisation and history have given it, in common with other Christian nations, an enormous amount of power and influence. The Chinese Government, under pressure of this power, has recognised what is in itself absolutely and indisputably true, that all men, and the Chinese like others, have an inalienable right to follow the truth and to worship God without interference or persecution. In the providence of God we have, willingly or unwillingly, become to the Chinese the asserters and representatives of

this undeniable principle. It is impossible for us to divest ourselves of this character and to assume that of the earliest preachers of Christianity, when it was a proscribed faith with neither wealth nor worldly influence behind it, still upon its trial and facing without support the whole strength of the civilised world. Most of us have learned to refuse to take up cases of individual wrong, even when these appeal most keenly to our sympathies. We continually find that stories of this sort are never told us in their entirety, and it is often better that those who are wronged should suffer wrongly than that we should, while endeavouring to right their wrongs enable them to wrong others or to create a feeling of bitterness against themselves among their non-Christian neighbours.

But when a combined effort is made to prevent the profession of Christianity in a village, town, or district, when there is no question of private dispute, and where it is impossible to adjust matters by reasonable explanations and private conference, it seems to be legitimate and right that we should claim through official channels the recognition of the right of the people to profess the Christian religion without interference.

The missionary in China is not left long in doubt as to the necessity for combining the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove. Well for him if amid all complications he can, by God's grace, maintain the steadfast simplicity that becomes the servant of Christ!

LECTURE XII

PERSONAL PRIVILEGE AND DUTY

I SAID in the opening lecture that for yourselves as students of theology there must always run parallel with these discussions the question, What is the bearing of these things on personal life and duty? But I have kept the promise with which I began, that I should regard it as your business rather than mine to make the personal application to yourselves. I have not made appeals to you to give yourselves to foreign mission service, and I have not based the matter on sentiment or on what is called the romance of missions. It has been my wish to let the facts put before you make their own appeal, and I have confined myself to a bare statement of a few aspects of Chinese life, literature and religion, with some outline of the principles and practice of mission work, and a summary of its results in a particular mission field. Now in this closing lecture I will not hesitate to speak frankly to you and say that the only thing that can justify the existence of this lectureship, and certainly the only thing that would induce me to hold it is the hope of influencing the direction of your own life work. As students of theology, you have pledged your lives to the service of Christ in the Gospel, and it must be to you a question of the profoundest importance how and where your life work may best be done. In speaking to you of China and mission work there, although it has been done very imperfectly, I hope the general impression has been left upon your minds that you have been hearing of a great people and a great work. I entirely agree with what is some-

times said, that we ought not to draw a broad distinction between the home and foreign mission field. The work done in those two regions is essentially the same, and a faithful servant of Jesus Christ may equally approve himself in either. But while these two fields are ideally one, practically for each man they are exclusive of each other. He who undertakes to work in the one is necessarily shut out from the other, and one can hardly exaggerate the importance of the choice you are compelled to make in passing from university and college life to practical work in the larger world.

Some are debarred from the free exercise of choice between these two fields by urgent personal considerations of which I will mention only three.

1. On the ground of health. In China and other mission fields the conditions of life are largely different from those with which you are familiar at home. In some fields physical privations and hard labour in untoward circumstances must be faced, but of course the chief consideration with regard to health arises from the question of climate. In most mission fields our work is done under a tropical sun, and sometimes in a malarious atmosphere. It is nearly always necessary to give more attention to the care of one's health than would be required at home; and the conditions being less familiar, men are apt to make mistakes, especially at the outset of their career, and incur risks which care and prudence might have avoided. It is impossible for the best medical skill to foretell whether the constitution of any individual is well adapted or otherwise to live in a tropical climate. At the same time it is well to remember that the climate of our own country has dangers of its own, and that some men may reasonably look for better health on the foreign field than at home. The real question which one has to consider, and on which medical advice is helpful, is whether a man is actually of sound health. There is no

mysterious condition of fitness to bear tropical climates other than this, that one's constitution and organs must be sound, and that the man himself should be prepared to exercise reasonable care and prudence, especially in regard to food and exposure to sun and to malaria. If there is weakness in any important organ or vital function, the conditions of life in the foreign field are not unlikely to develop it into a cause of danger. But wherever the two conditions exist of sound health and reasonable prudence in the care of it, no one need feel himself debarred from foreign service by consideration of physical health.

2. Others feel restrained from facing the question by family ties and home claims. It is both a difficult and delicate matter to offer advice in regard to restraints of this kind, which involve considerations which not only touch closely each man's conscience, but which involve also the interests of those nearly related to him. But it is very easy to exaggerate the restraints imposed upon us by these home claims. May I say frankly that home opposition to a man's going abroad, unless based on sound reasons, is not of itself an obstacle to which one must necessarily yield? There is perhaps a danger of creating opposition of this sort by prematurely raising the question before one has attained to clear light or formed a settled purpose in regard to it. I remember a friend of my own who, under a sudden impulse, thought of offering himself for foreign mission work. He spoke of the matter at home, and was immediately told by his mother that he must never raise the question again. He never did, because he had not yet fully considered it. He was silenced without being convinced, and his conscience was not satisfied. It is better that the matter should be well weighed before anything is said, and that whatever action one takes should be based on a well-grounded conviction of duty. A man may easily exaggerate the importance

of his personal presence to the comfort and happiness of those nearest to him, and may on the other hand fail to realise how many compensations may come to them not only in spite of his departure to the foreign field, but even in consequence of it. May I refer to my own experience by way of illustration? As an only son, when I went to the foreign field I left at home my mother and three sisters, who might fairly have made a strong claim for my remaining at home, but from no one of them did I ever hear a single word of remonstrance or opposition. When I returned from my first term of service only one of these four remained in life, and yet I never had a moment's reason for regret for the decision which I made. I had ample testimony that the tie formed with the foreign mission field became to those who remained at home a signal means of grace, and the source of a large amount of genuine happiness, which, if weighed in the right balance, fully compensated them, I believe, for any loss they might have incurred. There are many cases in which the question does not arise in so acute a form, but even if it does, I can testify with the clearest conviction, and from some experience, that the dearest ties and the strongest claims of home life need not always debar one from accepting service in the foreign field.

3. The third of these restraints is the most formidable, and one of which it is very difficult for the individual to judge, I mean the fear of incompetence for the special and varied work required of the foreign missionary. There are men who are really incompetent for work abroad, just as there are men, men even who have been passed by examination boards and presbyteries, who are equally incompetent for ministerial work at home. Anyone who rightly estimates the nature of foreign mission work will naturally and rightly be very ready to charge himself with incompetence to meet its demands, and I should be very slow to advise any man to go abroad unless there

were good reason to consider him well suited for this special service. There are many degrees of competence, and any man who is fitted to be useful at home would probably be useful to some degree abroad; but with the limited means at their disposal, foreign mission committees cannot at present afford to send out less than the best men they can get. They are therefore somewhat jealous guardians of the appointments which they make, and if anyone fears that he is incompetent for foreign service, he at least need not fear to submit the question to the judgment of those who know him. Different foreign fields call for different gifts and types of men, and those who are unsuited for one may be very well fitted for useful service in another.

For these reasons, while giving due place to these three restraints—health, home claims, and personal incompetence—which along with other matters may seem to some of you to debar practical consideration of the question of foreign service, I would urge you not to make too much of them, but to place them in their due relation to questions of another kind.

If not debarred by any of these restraints, I assume that you will give the question fair and earnest attention. You have offered yourselves for the Church's service, and I assume that the offer is made without reservations. I do not suppose for a moment that you will be withheld from undertaking any line of service for petty or selfish reasons, but there is a danger that the foreign field may suffer from lack of deliberate consideration and choice. The work that lies close around early receives your attention; your first essays in Christian service are made in the field of home mission work, and a man must have very little zeal or sensitiveness who does not very soon feel that his heart and sympathies are rooting themselves deeply in the work he has taken in hand among people of his own race. Work of this kind may soon loom so large

in our view as to obscure what is farther off, and it requires a conscious effort, sometimes a great effort, to put the two spheres of service justly before our minds so as to make a well-weighed choice. When I was a student an incident occurred which helped me to a decision. I went one evening to preach in a home mission where I had previously worked. I asked the door-keeper how they were getting on. "Weel, sir," he said, "we've a great deal to contend wi'; there's Mr Broon, he has opened a hall jist on the other side of the street!" I thought of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and felt that if these ancient enemies had given place to the harmless hostilities of "Mr Broon," my services were not very urgently required, and I might with a good conscience transfer them to some other field where one might hope to find foes more worthy of Christian steel.

If anyone feels so impressed by the needs of home work that he hesitates to consider other fields, let me suggest a simple method which may help to determine personal duty. Resolve that you will not offer yourself for any post for which there are other candidates as competent as yourself. In Great Britain there are about 38,000,000 souls, and among these there are about 44,000 ministers, and over 700,000 Sabbath school teachers. In China there are of foreign missionaries about 400 ordained men, 500 unordained, and 700 women, besides the wives of the missionaries, something over 2000 in all. The ratio of these workers to the population is as if you had in Edinburgh one minister and one Sabbath school teacher to do all the evangelistic and pastoral work of the city.

I believe another hindrance often prevents the equal consideration of the foreign field. Men hesitate to offer themselves for foreign work who are not unwilling to consider its claims if summoned to it by a mission committee or some other outward call. They feel that to

offer themselves savours perhaps of presumption, and not knowing what appointments on the mission field may be open at the time, not unjustly fear lest after offering they should meet with a refusal, and so underlie a certain stigma, as having been rejected by competent judges in making application for an honourable field of service. A feeling of hesitation on this ground is perfectly justifiable and even wise, but there are ways of overcoming the difficulty and making known your willingness to respond to calls for foreign service, without making a formal offer and incurring the risk of a refusal. You may have access to men occupying responsible positions in foreign mission committees who will advise you on these matters, and it should surely be well understoōd that the holder of this lectureship is bound to put himself at your disposal in giving any advice or assistance in regard to questions of this kind. I should consider it, for my part, a great privilege if any of you would trust me so far as to talk over the question of your field of future service privately in a frank and confidential way, and that whether your wishes might lead you to think of China, or of some other of the mission fields of your own Church. I have a very vivid recollection of my own difficulties at this stage. When I reached the end of my theological course I had few doubts on the question between home and foreign service, for these had been settled long before, but the difficulty was very great to decide between a call to Bombay and a call to China. I have therefore the keenest sympathy with anyone who is seriously considering questions of this kind, and would very gladly be of service to him in helping him to a wise decision.

There are two points of view from which you may approach the question of whether your duty lies in the direction of home or of foreign work. As a missionary I fear I cannot pretend to divest myself of all bias in favour of the foreign field, but I will try to put these two points of

view before you in the hope of helping you to think out the question for yourselves. From the first point of view the question may be stated in this form: What field of service will give me the best opportunities for the development of my own spiritual and mental life, and my individual character as a Christian man? From the second it it will take the form: How may I best serve the Church? Where can I hope to do most good to others, and which of the two fields has the strongest claim on the service which I may be able to offer?

It may seem that the latter of these questions is the broader and better way of putting the matter, but I think the first is an equally worthy question for a man to put to himself, and is perhaps the one that should be first considered. Whatever my work in the world may be, my first duty is surely to develop to the best advantage all the powers, physical, mental and spiritual, which God has given me as my endowment for service. I will therefore first consider the question from this point of view.

It is often represented that the man who embarks on foreign work makes large sacrifices of his own interests in the hope of rendering service to others. No doubt there are many of the conditions of home life which are eminently favourable to the growth and culture of one's own character. These are the opportunities of contact with the great body of long-established and highly developed Christian life and society, free access to books and other means of mental and spiritual stimulus. But if I have succeeded in putting the mission field before you with any clearness, you will perhaps be prepared to believe me that you may hope to find there many influences not less favourable to the development of your own life and character. I have tried to show you how various are the forms of mission work. Whether a man's tastes lie mainly in the direction of scholarship and literature, of direct evangelistic work, or ecclesiastical life and organisa-

tion, he will find the fullest scope for them on the mission field.

A notable feature of national and political life is the growth in our own time of the imperial spirit, and a sense of the largeness of our obligations to the great colonies and dependencies under our control. It has been often pointed out how the great responsibilities of Empire stimulate and draw out many of the best qualities of our race, and tend to produce, both in our army and in the civil and diplomatic services, men of the highest intellectual power and the finest types of character. Is there not something analogous to this in our Church life? Is there not a danger lest we should allow it to narrow itself so that it becomes local, and what has been called parochial, and is it not one of the great advantages of the development of foreign missions in recent times that it helps, as it were, to imperialise our Christianity, to give us a larger horizon and a freer atmosphere, and to call into more strenuous exercise a higher intellectual energy and a larger spiritual life; and if that be so, may we not anticipate for ourselves individually that the highest development of our own powers may be found in placing ourselves upon the wider field? At home only men of very exceptional powers can expect to stand out in any degree from the great body of the Christian army or to leave permanent mark upon the Church's work. Every labourer in the home field is in close contact on all sides with many others, in not a few of whom he probably recognises greater powers than his own. His own department of work is often strictly limited and conditioned by the spheres allotted to those above, below and around him. But on the foreign field the missionary for the most part stands almost alone. At the best he is one of a very small body who are jointly responsible for all the varied departments of service which the time calls for. It is theirs also to watch the course of events; to recognise the

signs of the times; to make new departures and strike out new lines of work as necessity arises. Each man therefore feels called upon to bring out the very best and utmost that is in him, and many men have discovered on the foreign field, to their own surprise and to the surprise of others, powers and capacities, both mental and spiritual, of whose existence they were not previously aware. I have myself even taught singing on the mission field, which is to those who know me the quaintest possible illustration of what I have been saying.

I have seen this illustrated amongst my own colleagues, and it should be a marked feature of every healthy mission body that every man makes some fresh and distinctive contribution to the shaping and development of the work of his mission, and in doing so finds also scope and discipline for his own nature and character.

Let us now turn to the second point of view which I have suggested. From the first you have to estimate the probable effect of your work upon the development of your own powers. From the second you have to consider how the powers which you are conscious of possessing in greater or less degree may be best applied to accomplish the great ends of your Christian service. Where can you hope to do most good, and how may you best serve the Church? No one will deny that there is an ample field for Christian service in our own country, and that any man may hope to spend his days profitably in the Church's service here if he is called of God to enter it, but if we cherish large ambitions in the best sense, I believe the opportunities for service are for most men immeasurably larger on the mission field.

The work to be done there is called for by three classes of people, all of whom have the strongest possible claims upon our service. There is first the great mass of non-Christian people who have not yet been reached by any of our mission work, who are still in unbroken moral and

spiritual darkness. In the Hok-lo section of the Swatow mission field alone, each of our fifty mission stations, with its sphere of influence indicated on the map, reaches on the average some 200 villages, containing a population of nearly 80,000 souls; so that these fifty stations, which are worked at present by only three ordained men, reach a total population of about three millions and a half. Even after the forty years of our mission history there are still, as you see, considerable blanks upon the map, and the great mass of the non-Christian people are as yet wholly untouched. If that is so in a mission which has been so long established, and whose field is fairly well covered with stations, you can in some degree understand how enormous is the work still to be done over the vast field of the whole Empire. I have tried to give you some idea of the moral and spiritual condition of these great multitudes of people, and in this connection I must refer shortly to one question of profound difficulty. You have often seen appeals on behalf of missions based on the plea that all the innumerable multitudes of the heathen who die without hearing the Gospel must perish everlastingly. Is this a principal motive? It is hardly too much to say that in the earlier mission literature this is the chief ground of appeal. I wish, gentlemen, that I could honestly pass by this profoundly difficult question. I might perhaps do so on the ground that to answer it wisely requires far more knowledge of theology than I possess, and more careful special study than I have ever been able to give to it. It is a question which must weigh heavily on the spirit of every missionary, and cannot be long absent from his mind. It is one thing to reason in the abstract about multitudes and millions far away; it is quite another when one is thinking of the laughing boys and girls, the hearty, kindly young men, the weary old men and burdened women, among whom one is living, and from whom one has times without number received

the little kindnesses and courtesies which even in a heathen country are so often shown to the passing stranger.

I feel bound to say to you that whatever conclusion one might be driven to by irresistible conviction, I at least could never speak of the belief that all heathen men and women and children who do not hear the Gospel are inevitably doomed to eternal death, as a motive to the work of missions. On the contrary—"that way madness lies"—this doctrine, if it forced itself without any conceivable alleviation on my mind, would utterly paralyse me. It would weigh with crushing force, and could never be to me a spring or motive for action.

I see two men, one born without his own choice in China, taking up his inheritance of a shallow narrow life, a life of the earth earthy, with neither the gloom nor the glory which are cast by the light and shadow of the unseen world, and to whom the word of revelation has never come; another, born in a Christian country, reared in an atmosphere of Christian piety, learning from his earliest years the words of life, and living under the powers of the world to come; and I remember that the second has been commanded by the just Lord to tell his brother the way of life, but he has been preoccupied busy here and there, has had, as Browning says, "his beetles to collect," and for eighteen centuries has forgotten to tell his brother—and then you tell me that this last, who knew, shall be saved in the Great Day and his brother, who knew not, shall be lost for ever.

Nay, I will rather take my righteous Lord at His own most gracious word—"He that knew not shall be beaten with few stripes."

But when we try to define our thoughts, and build them into a clear hope, we find only mystery and darkness. The shallow solution often offered, that if the heathen live up to the light they have they shall be

saved, is no solution. They do not live up to their light, and so the difficulty remains. I do not pretend to solve this mystery, but I may remind you that your Church has openly declared that on this subject she does not propose to bind your consciences or your beliefs. In the Declaratory Act of 1892 it is said: "It is the duty of those who believe, and one end of their calling by God, to make known the Gospel to all men everywhere for the obedience of faith. And that while the Gospel is the ordinary means of salvation for those to whom it is made known, yet it does not follow, nor is the Confession to be held as teaching, that any who die in infancy are lost, or that God may not extend His mercy for Christ's sake, and by His Holy Spirit, to those who are beyond the reach of these means, as it may seem good to Him, according to the riches of His grace." And I am not sure that any wiser words have been spoken on this dark subject than those in which the learned principal of New College, Edinburgh, expounded the Act: "We are the furthest removed in the world from wishing to encourage speculations, extra-Biblical speculations, as to the condition and case of those who in the mysterious providence of God even now, 1800 years after the Gospel began to be preached, are still outside of the reach of the means of grace. On the other hand, no one can fail to feel that here we are in the presence of a great mystery, in regard to which we must take heed how we speak, and what burdens we lay upon men. . . . I do think that we are entitled to say that the Confession is not to be held as teaching absolutely that it is out of the question that in any of those cases God may not, for Christ's sake and by His Spirit, find His way to the hearts and lives of some of these people. The discouraging thing about it is that one does not seem to see it. One does not seem to see anywhere in those dark regions, with their varieties,

doubtless, of human character and human conduct, a better and a worse—one does not seem to see anything that looks like saintship anywhere singularly emerging among them; we are compelled to lay our hands upon our lips—is it unseemly, is it unscriptural, that we should say that we do not know whether God may not extend His mercy for Christ's sake by His Holy Spirit to some of them, as it may seem good to Him?"

With these wise words, weightier than any that I could use, I will leave this great question unsolved. It lies under a cloud of great darkness; but behind the cloud is GOD, and He doeth all things well.

Whatever dim solace we may gather on this subject from Scripture, and whatever half-formed thoughts we may cherish, we cannot but feel, as we look around us in a heathen country, that, without trenching on things too deep for us, the burden of these millions of souls is crushing enough. We see in the daily life and character of the people around us a profound need of the Gospel as a new law of life, and of the Living Christ as the only Saviour who can through it bring life and immortality to clear light.

The work to be done among the non-Christian masses of the people is very various, and the doors of opportunity are many and wide, in all successful mission fields. Work of this kind is at present to a very large extent left undone. The demands of a growing Church for care and teaching leave less and less time for work among those outside. We often earnestly wish that our numbers would allow us to set apart some men almost exclusively for evangelistic work. Such men should be set free from all pastoral responsibilities among the Christian Churches, and from all entanglement in the business arrangements which must be attended to at the centre of every large mission. They should be free to spend their time amongst

the people in the cities and country districts, making a large study of native literature, religions and life; coming into the closest possible contact with all classes of the people, and free to devise and carry out methods of bringing the Gospel in all its aspects, as bearing both on individual and national life, within their reach. They should itinerate in the country districts, reaching by open-air preaching and by private conversations the great bulk of the common people. They should visit schools and literary retreats in order to reach the professional scholars. They should have time to make a thorough study of the classical books, and to clear their own minds as to the best ways of bringing into comparison and contrast with them both the practical and scientific aspects of Christian theology. They should find their way into the warehouses, shops, and homes of the mercantile classes, and the official residences of the magistrates, expounding among these capable and intelligent men of the world the bearings of Christianity upon national prosperity, as well as pressing upon them the Gospel of Christ as the only way of individual regeneration. In the present condition of China much might also be done by public or semi-public lectures on Western civilisation, science and philosophy, showing how these are dominated by the teachings of Christ, and how in these alone is to be found the secret of national prosperity. The same men, or others, should be free to devote much time to the translation, or better still, to the composition, of books by which similar subjects might be brought clearly and comprehensively within the reach of the reading classes; as well as to the creation of a religious literature of a simpler type, which might be used in conjunction with evangelistic preaching for bringing the essentials of Christian truth pointedly and powerfully before the minds of cultured and uncultured readers alike. The Society for the diffusion of Christian and general knowledge has done

much in recent years to produce and distribute a large amount of varied literature of a high class, for which there is a large and growing demand amongst the best minds in all parts of China. Their publications have been largely circulated at the great gatherings of literary men in the provincial and other Civil Service examinations. But far more should be done along these lines, and their work is greatly hindered by the fact that very few missionaries have time to devote to it. In large cities any man with the soul of an evangelist, and the equipment of a scholar, and with a sympathetic genial heart, could easily find access to large numbers of Chinese homes, where he would be welcomed as a friend, and might soon by the blessing of God become a spiritual power of immeasurable value. In these and many other ways which time and experience would develop, the evangelisation of the great bulk of the Chinese people remains still to be undertaken, and no man need covet a larger or more varied field of usefulness than this, which is waiting all over China for any who are willing and fitted to enter upon it.

The second class of those demanding our help on the mission field consists of the members of the young and growing native Church. We have to deal with them as members of congregations, as pupils in schools and colleges, and to cherish as full a personal knowledge as possible of their individual circumstances, temptations, and requirements. As I have said, we have a large amount of valuable help in caring for them in the work of our native preachers, but these can never relieve us of our responsibility. There is much help that the foreign missionary can render out of his experience of the more advanced Christian life of the West, the fuller training which he has enjoyed, and the better appliances within his reach for the minute study of Scripture and its application to the varied problems of the Christian life. There

is urgent need, therefore, for a great deal more preaching on the part of the foreign missionaries to the members of the native Church. There is no part of our mission work which is more delightful than the minute and varied study of Scripture, and the exhibition and enforcement of it among these bodies of Christian people whose interest is thoroughly awake, and whose growing Christian life is fully able to assimilate all that we can gather for them out of the treasures of grace and truth revealed in Scripture. The students in our colleges, upon whose training depends largely the character which will be assumed by the Chinese Church in coming days, are eager for more thorough teaching than we, with our limited numbers, are able to give them. They have a wholesome appetite for work, and are more apt to reproach us for giving them too little than for making too large demands on their time and energy. In Swatow alone two men would find an ample and most enjoyable field of work in the training of our theological students. The watchful and sympathetic administration of Church discipline is another large field of labour to which we are able at present to give far too little attention, and the visitation of our Christian people at their homes affords to them, so far as we can accomplish it, the keenest pleasure, and gives comfort which is sorely needed amidst the trying experiences of their Christian life, lived in the midst of an overwhelming mass of heathen society. Our presbyterial organisation, with its arrangements for the systematic visitation and oversight of the congregations, its constant demand for wise and cautious legislation and administration, both as regards the outward framework of the Church and as regards the cultivation and utilisation of its spiritual energies, is another field which would profitably absorb much more than all the time and strength at our disposal. I have spoken of the demand for the production of a broad and high-class literature for evangelistic use,

and we need a similar literature adapted to meet the wants of all classes of our Christian people. Scripture translation is at present occupying a large amount of time and strength, and will continue to do so for many years to come. Personally, I have mortgaged half my time for ten years to this work. The whole department of commentaries and text-books to aid private Christians and professional students in the study of Scripture is as yet almost wholly untouched. There is an urgent need for text-books over all the range of subjects required by students in Christian colleges and younger pupils in Christian schools. Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," with its marvellous wealth of Christian experience, is already endearing itself to the Christian Church, and it stands as yet almost alone as a specimen of popular devotional literature; and whilst we seek to teach our people to keep the Lord's Day holy, it is extremely difficult for them to fill it up in a profitable way until we put within their reach a popular Christian literature adapted to their needs. We have as yet very few books of this class, and this need must remain unmet until we have in all our missions men with the necessary leisure and the special gifts which shall enable them to supply it.

There remains the third class of those who are in urgent need of our help and service—a class who in some respects have a stronger claim upon us than either the heathen or the members of the Christian Church. I mean the class which within the last few years especially has become a very numerous one, and which is daily growing in numbers—the inquirers and applicants for Christian baptism. They no longer belong to the mass of heathenism; they are worshippers of God, and many of them are members of the body of Christ. But they are not yet numbered in our Church rolls, or counted as converts. They are ready to make the Christian profession, and many of them have already endured obloquy

and persecution on account of their profession amongst their own people of their new faith. They are regular attenders at Christian worship, and many of them have made considerable attainment in the knowledge of Christian truth. But our numbers are so few, even with the aid of our native ordained brethren, that it is impossible for us to overtake the examination and sifting of the large numbers who are waiting for baptism. When two or three men have to meet the large demands of a mission centre, and at the same time to distribute their energies over forty or sixty or a hundred out-stations, it is obviously impossible for them to deal promptly and efficiently with hundreds and perhaps thousands of inquirers, who are seeking admission to the Christian Church over a wide expanse of country. Besides, we are frequently being visited by worshippers at a still more elementary stage of their Christian profession, who come entreating us to open places of worship in their villages and to provide them with Christian teachers. There are few pieces of work more trying to a missionary than the effort to persuade a number of ardent worshippers, who are just escaping from the hold of heathenism, to be content to remain unshepherded, and to pursue as best they may the Christian life amongst the heathen, without the sympathy and guidance which we long to give them.

China is now in a critical condition. Her great powers and possibilities are being thrown into the melting-pot—not, as I believe, to be consumed, but to be purified of her dross, and recast in new forms, worthy of the gold, silver, and precious stones, which shall stand the trial of the Great Day. I have pointed out to you some parallels between China and the Roman Empire, between the mission Church and the Church of the early Christian centuries. Not long ago we were nearer than we dreamed of to another parallel—to a repetition, with all its evil,

and perhaps with some of its good, of the conversion of Constantine. A palace intrigue has checked for the moment the raw haste of some too eager leaders of revolution. But time is on our side, and God is working for his own. Great changes are coming, and the longer they are delayed the more earth-shaking will be the upheaval when it comes. A growing Church among a strong people burdened by a decadent Empire—the spirit of life working against the forces of death and decay in the one great Pagan Empire which the wrecks of millenniums have left on the Earth—surely there is a call to service that might fire the spirit of the dullest of us!

We hail recent events as the struggle between darkness and light which always ends in dawn. The Christian mission has given to China her first reformers, men not yet Christians, but touched by the Christian spirit. Six of these have laid down their lives as martyrs of her regeneration, one of them exclaiming on his way to death, "For every head that falls to-day a thousand will arise to carry on the good cause."

The hope of China lies in the building up of a pure and strong Christian Church, which shall supply the elements of character which alone can save the nation, and shall so permeate with the Christian spirit the stores of knowledge and material power now pressed on China's acceptance by the West, as to make them a means of life, not an occasion of ruin and calamity.

Much depends on how we deal with our opportunity. We have a native Church of over 80,000 communicants, many thousands of worshippers and hearers, and we have free access to millions of awakened and inquiring minds.

If you will come and help us to mould aright these precious materials for building up there the Kingdom of Heaven, we shall, please God, save China yet! But powers of evil are at work as well as the powers of good. If we fail in our part now the glowing metal that seems

all but ready for the touch of the Divine Artist will fall cold and hard again, and the Church may have to wait through decades, if not centuries, of shame and remorse, for the return of the opportunity of to-day. Those are to be envied who shall witness during the coming twenty years the great ingathering in China — the greatest triumph of the Church, and of the Church's King, since the Christian centuries began to run their glorious course!

I thank you, gentlemen, for the attention you have given to these lectures. If they have helped to give definiteness to your thoughts of foreign mission work; and above all, if they shall help any of you to decide to choose the foreign field for your own sphere of service; it will be to me a sufficient compensation for absence from my own post during a most critical time, when even the little help that one man can give can ill be spared.

I wish you God-speed in all your work and studies here, and an abundant blessing upon the life work to which God may afterwards call you. If by God's kind leading we meet again on the mission field, I will add to this "God-speed" my heartiest welcome!

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MAP OF SWATOW MISSION FIELD

THE map is designed to illustrate the growth of a mission, and the way in which its stations gradually cover the field of work. It is assumed that the influence of a station reaches a distance of six miles. Accordingly in the map each station has a circle drawn round it of six miles' radius. The area thus enclosed is coloured to indicate the period at which it was opened. The history of the mission is divided into eight periods, the first of eight years, and all the others of five years each. To each period a colour is assigned, beginning with violet for the earliest, and following the order of the spectrum down to red for the latest.

Several practical lessons are enforced by the map :—

1. When stations are sparse each influences a complete circle of the radius assigned. When they become more numerous these areas overlap, and the effective area of each is diminished. The smaller area should be so much the more thoroughly worked, to compensate for this loss in extension.

2. A station may be so placed that it loses a large part of its effective area ; for example, on the sea coast, especially if on a promontory, or at the base of mountains with little population. Thus, Chia-na and Chia-nng are badly placed for area of influence, while Am-pou and Chao-chow-foo are placed to the best advantage. But other considerations must often determine the choice.

3. It is seen at a glance that stations have a natural tendency to follow, with the population, the course of the river basins.

4. It is good policy to open stations widely apart at first, and later to fill in the gaps. In this way a large area is rapidly reached, while more thorough work naturally follows at a later stage.

5. In the neighbourhood of the larger rivers stations have to be multiplied. Rivers which form lines of traffic facilitating intercourse between distant points offer a barrier to local traffic in transverse directions. To this circumstance, added to density of population, is due the multiplication of stations near Kieh-yang city.

6. Within any part of the coloured areas no one need go farther than six miles from his home to hear the Gospel.

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